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Ladymatic







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On the cover

Mozambique's São Sebastião peninsula, photographed by Mirjam Bleeker

See full feature on page 86

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CHANEL



ELCOME TO OUR ISLANDS ISSUE. I love an island. Who doesn't? But perhaps my favourite island of all is Bali. So my friend Jo and I are 18 and we've just left home for our first big trip.

We're on a motorbike driving up from Denpasar to Mount Batur. This is more than 20 years ago, so there's pretty much nothing around, just endless trees and layers of paddy fields. We have strapped speakers onto our motorbike and we are listening to Enigma. (Do I want to change this part of the story? Yes, obviously. But I can't. Because this is the voice of Enigma). Either way, Bali is blowing us away with its beauty. It is lush and green, and it is wild and unlike anything I have ever seen. It is South-east Asia. It smells of warm earth and frangipani and clove and woodsmoke, and the noise of the place is of bird and beast and jungle yawp. Suddenly there is a roadside stall selling rambutans and sweets on strings, and cigarettes and wax matches. We park the motorbike. There is a young girl behind the stall. We point at two lemonades and begin to drink. After a while we notice someone appearing from around a tree to look at us. And then

someone else. At some point, one of us begins to giggle. Then someone else begins to giggle, and then all of us are giggling, as more and more men, women, children, grannies and toddlers appear, peeking out from the forest, slowly gathering in a circle around us. And the more we giggle, the more it catches on. And more people are appearing! Loads of them, and us, laughing and giggling, and collapsing in half, hands over our mouths, hands clutching our stomachs, rolling back on our haunches, laughing laughing and not a single word said between us, like we're never going to stop. Two young white girls and a whole Balinese village giggling in a jungle electric-green and gleaming.

This is the islands issue of *Condé Nast Traveller*. So if Bali is my favourite island, then what's yours, and why? Shout out to us with your suggestions on Instagram and Twitter... and we will give the best a bag of goodies.





Melinda Stevens Editor

LOOK OUT FOR THE LOVE NOTES THROUGHOUT THIS ISSUE IN WHICH WELL-TRAVELLED FOLK AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF THE CONDÉ NAST TEAM REVEAL THE ISLANDS THAT REALLY FLOAT THEIR BOATS



My favourite island is... Porquerolles

Author of Birdsong and Charlotte Gray and BBC quiz team captain

'Porquerolles is a funny little place, a short boat ride from the south coast of France, near Toulon, only seven kilometres by three. You can't

drive a car, so you have to hire a bicycle; but to get the most from it you need to walk or run, to crash through the brambles and go down to the rocky inlets they call 'calanques'. Here you can be dive-bombed by seagulls or throw yourself into the turbulent water. The port has a strip of bars and restaurants, all more or less disgusting, but a decent alimentation and one passable hotel dining room in the square. The Auberge des Glycines is the best place to stay in the port. The dock area has various salons de thé and ice-cream parlours so firmly shut it is hard to imagine they might ever open. So buy a picnic and head off. From the eucalypti in the square, you go past umbrella pines, oleanders and other semi-tropical species, through to coarse scrub, heather and wilder rock-loving little plants. There's a charming cemetery with - most unusually - more dead from World War II than World War I. I took the 7am ferry to the mainland and found it full of schoolchildren commuting back to normality - or to France, at least.'



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CHANEL



ISLAND EXPLORERS

This month we asked our contributors who they'd like to be stranded on a desert island with

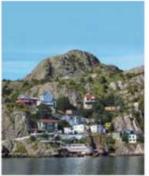




Cara Delevingne Parrot Cay (p118)

It'd have to be **Bear Grylls**. We would drink snake blood, wrestle alligators and probably build a boat. He was climbing Mount Everest by the time he was my age, so there would be no question of my not surviving.' Supermodel-turned-actress Cara is starring in several films out this year and is currently shooting in Paris alongside Clive Owen and Rihanna





Margaret Atwood Newfoundland (p29)

'Caliban would know where all the roots, berries and fish are, is good at carrying logs and has an entertaining vocabulary of swear words. At my age I wouldn't have to worry about his, you know, urges, and he might even worship me like a god.' *Margaret lives in Toronto and her most recent novel, 'The Heart Goes Last', is out now*





Simon Armitage Earth (p62)

'It's impossible not to choose **Shakespeare**, given that we know next to nothing about him. I'd start by asking him if he really did write all those plays and poems, and we'd take it from there. I would avoid taking him on at Scrabble, though.' *Simon has been awarded a CBE for his services to poetry and is a professor at Oxford University*





Sebastian Faulks Porquerolles (p12)

'Charles Darwin and Rooney Mara. We'd talk about natural selection and find out how Rooney came by her name. Then I'd take them both on at a game of tennis and after a grilled-fish dinner we'd probably play charades.' Sebastian is the author of 'Birdsong' and 'Where My Heart Used to Beat'





Ella Eyre Jamaica (p74)

I recently got to work with **Joanna Lumley** on a project and she was hilarious from start to finish, so I'd take her with me. That way, even when we're desperate with nothing to eat, at least I know I'd be laughing too.' *Ella is a London-based singer-songwriter and has collaborated with artists such as Rudimental and Paloma Faith. Her debut album. Feline', is out now*





Marian Keyes Deception Island (p30)
Td like to be stranded with ballroom dancer Pasha

Kovalev – he could teach me Russian and how to dance. I might as well put the time to good use.' *Award-winning novelist Marian was born in Limerick and now lives in Dún Laoghaire, just outside Dublin. Her new autobiographical book, 'Making It Up As I Go Along', is out next month*









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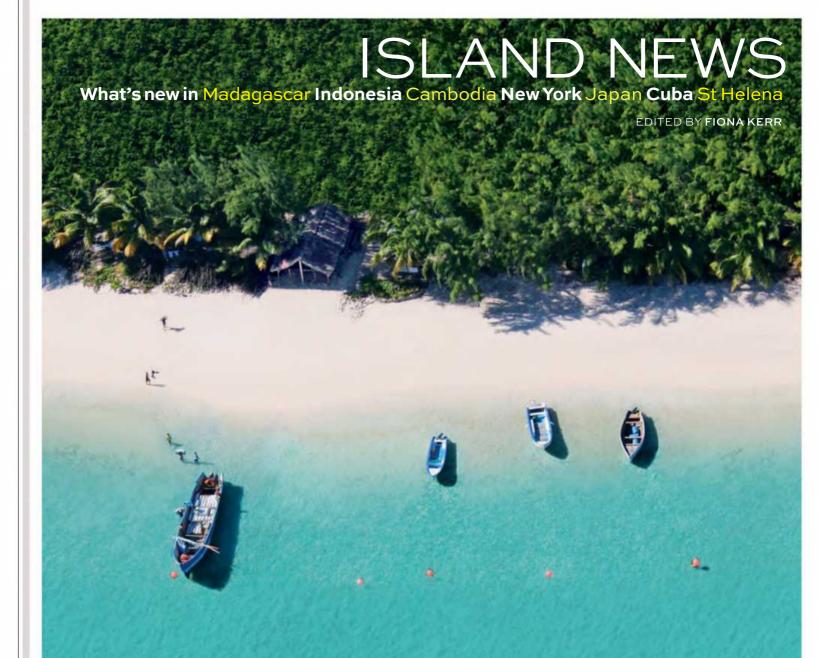




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Personal space

A new wave of private-island retreats is washing up on the most remote and unspoilt shores

If you've been to all seven continents, it's time to venture to the elusive 'eighth': Madagascar. Some say the island is difficult to classify – not quite African, not quite Asian – but that otherness means its biodiversity rivals the Galápagos. By October 2016, there will be a new reason to go, as Miavana, pictured, opens as a rival to supreme North Island in the Seychelles, with 14 sensational villas on Nosy Ankao off the north-east coast, where you can kite-surf, hike into the rainforest and trek to see lemurs. The natural world is also the focus at eco-conscious Bawah Island, new this coming autumn, on a secluded Indonesian atoll in the Anambas archipelago.

The 35 villas have been built entirely by hand using bamboo, stone and recycled teak, with the aim of protecting local plant and marine life. A holistic approach is also at the heart of Arovada by AKARYN, a serious new destination spa on the Cambodian island of Koh Krabey. Opening in June, the 40 glass villas have been created by the fashion designer Kenzo and on check-in guests will meet a consultant to assess their wellbeing and prescribe a tailored programme, including treatments such as vibration-focused chromo-therapy and an anti-ageing placenta injection. SARAH KHAN www.timeandtideafrica.com/miavana; doubles from about £2,600. www.bawahisland.com; prices not yet available. www.akaryn.com/cambodia; doubles from about £1,235

ABOUT 400 MILES FROM TOKYO A CHAIN OF 12 TINY, UNASSUMING ISLES HAS QUIETLY BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT ART DESTINATIONS

Japanese publishing billionaire Soichiro Fukutake chose the archipelago in the Seto Inland Sea to house his vast art collection with an ambitious plan to revitalise this rural rust belt into cultural gold. Like most of Japan's countryside, the local fishing villages had long lost their young people to the cities, but Fukutuke has slowly been repopulating the islands with world-class art and architecture instead. Much of the permanent works are on Naoshima, where there are outdoor installations such as Yayoi Kasuma's yellow and black spotted pumpkin at the end of a pier, as well as a set of Monet's Water Lilies displayed in a cavernous all-white underground chamber at the Chichu Art Museum, designed by the minimalist

architect Tadao Ando. On neighbouring Teshima the Teshima Art Museum, pictured, rises like a concrete bubble from the surrounding woodland and rice terraces. This year the third Setouchi Triennale, which runs from 20 March to 6 November 2016, will cast fresh focus on the area, adding around 100 new artworks and a programme of music, film and dance to this already rich islandhopping art trail. Highlights include works by Japan's powerhouse female artist Sputniko!, as well the Wind Chime Project from French sculptor Christian Boltanski and the skeleton of a ship by Russian artist Alexander Ponomariov, which teeters on a hilltop.

MICHAEL FITZPATRICK www.setouchi-artfest.jp/en



ON THE RADAR ST HELENA

The craggy Atlantic outcrop synonymous with an emperor's exile is now much easier for regular travellers to conquer

Unique biodiversity, Napoleon's place of death, an open-topped charabanc and the world's oldest tortoise are some of the attractions that have historically defined visits to the island of St Helena. This speck in the South Atlantic has a population of just 4,255 who, until this year, were linked to the outside world only by a Royal Mail Ship, which also ferried people interested in the endemic flora and fauna on the five-day trip from Cape Town. A new airport – with five-hour flights from Johannesburg starting in February – will make it more accessible for another breed of traveller,

albeit one that can no longer revel in the drawn-out task of reaching one of the planet's remotest inhabited islands. Twenty-first-century contact hasn't come without controversy: the runway cuts across the home of the critically endangered wirebird and a number of rare invertebrates, but it's also an opportunity to generate a wider interest in their protection. For now, the island still has a wild feel. A barren coastline rings a verdant interior where forts, waterfalls and Longwood House museum (where Napoleon was exiled) are catnip to hikers and history buffs. The tiny faded capital, Jamestown, is squeezed between valley walls and has just a few restaurants. The best of the limited places to stay is the relaunched 18th-century Consulate Hotel while South Africa's Mantis group will open St Helena's first smart boutique property in three connected Georgian buildings later this year. www.sthelenatourism.com

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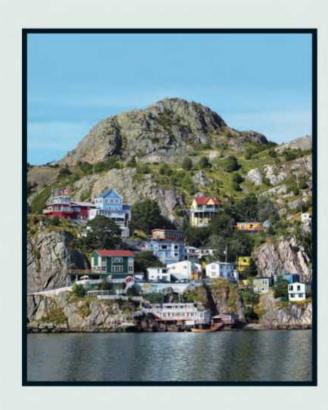


My favourite island is... Newfoundland

MARGARET ATWOOD

Booker Prize-winning author of The Blind Assassin

'Many will invoke palm trees and beaches for their dream island, but if blazing sun and sand in your bikini are no longer your ultimate joy, the more vigorous Newfoundland appeals. What's it got, in addition to spectacular scenery and hiking, numerous lobsters, unmistakable mittens, cod cheeks, and Screech, a form of rum that produces a sound effect when you drink it? Very funny people, with their own traditional music and unique Newfoundlandish vocabulary. Two genial web-footed water dogs: the Newfoundland and the Labrador. Fascinating geology: Newfoundland was once located at the South Pole, and acquired bits of Africa and North America through the magic of plate tectonics - a theory proven at Gros Morne National Park, where a huge lump of orange, toxic mantle stone bulges up through the earth's crust. Long, long history: 9,000 years of indigenous habitation, and that was before the Vikings built a trading base camp at L'Anse aux Meadows 500 years before Columbus. But - and this is the astonishing part - the Vikings are still there, sitting inside their longhouses, wearing their medieval clothing, and telling yarns, in Newfoundlandish, oddly enough. They'll tell you one, if you go there. Beats sand in your bikini, most days.'



STALL ORDERS

Tracking down food trucks is out. Indoor markets are in. From Pike Place in Seattle to Pier 24 in San Francisco, the skeletons of industrial buildings are being repurposed to bring street eats off the street. New York will soon have two new spots with big-name chefs taking a bite of the action

VS

NORDIC



The other one behind Noma, Claus Meyer is a man who knows how to multi-task. As well as co-founding the best restaurant in the world and creating the New Nordic food movement, he also set up social project and restaurant Gustu in Bolivia.

Opening this spring, Meyer's food hall in Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall will house a brasserie headed up by Icelandic chef Gunnar Gíslason, a coffee and pastry spot, a Nordic spirits bar and an open sandwich deli (plenty of rye bread).

THE CHEF

BOURDAIN MARKET

Chef-turned-presenter and knife-wielding bad boy, Anthony Bourdain has championed the world's street food (the no-frills variety rather than foie-gras-smothered brioche burgers) for the last decade with a series of TV culinary adventures down roads less travelled.

THE MARKET

Taking over the Hudson River's Pier 57 from 2017, the huge market will have the finest food and drink vendors at more than 100 stalls, all handpicked by Bourdain. There will be a wet market, and diners will gather around communal tables to eat everything from Chinese noodles to Spanish ham.

Meyer will apply his food philosophy to New York favourites, including hot dogs, creating Scandi flavours with local produce (for example, heritage Nordic oats have been replanted in American soil).

Sarah Lund knitwear, no-nonsense dark jeans and beards will mix with suited Midtown workers and skyscraper-dazed tourists.

'Which state was this apple vinegar produced in?

ON THE **MENU**

From Bourdain's favourite cart (La Guerrerense, Mexico) to the 'world's most beautiful butchers' (Victor Churchill, Sydney), the dishes here are about being able to eat globally, locally.

THE UNIFORM

DO SAY

French-made sunnies and ethically sourced shirts.

'I love the original Geylang Claypot Rice in Singapore."

International hipster: niche Japanese denim,

'Where's Shake Shack?'

DON'T SAY

'I'd like to make a reservation.'

GEORGINA WILSON-POWELL



My favourite island is... Deception

MARIAN KEYES

Twenty-million-copy-selling writer of books including Rachel's Holiday

'A still-active volcano in the coldest place on earth, a small lump of rock that is a long-deserted Norwegian whaling station, Deception Island is

ghostly and spooky and strange and sad and fascinating and fabulous (and has penguins). I make landfall on a misty, colour-free day and, well! The atmospherics! The island is surrounded by sulphur pools which steam up into the terrifyingly cold air. And the smell! Mother of divine! Like there are 40,000 hard-boiled-egg sandwiches sitting on the shore. I love it here. Love, love, love it and decree its name should be changed to Desolation Island. The sand is black and almost everything is in shades of charcoal: dark grey, medium grey, linen grey. Two wooden fishing boats lie rotting on the beach. Whitish whale bones litter the place. A long, low farmhouse still stands but the roof has caved in. A short distance from the house are piles of stones, each topped with a cross bearing Norwegianlooking names. There are massive metal drums that remind me of the Frank Gehry museum in Bilbao. My husband is palpably uneasy, "It's all a bit post-apocalyptic. Like one of those dystopian books you're so fond of." Really, I'm begging someone out there to make a 10-part series about a postapocalyptic world, set here. And if it could be in Swedish or Danish or Norwegian, so much the better.'



JESSICA DIAMOND. WATCH AND JEWELLERY EDITOR. ADORES MALLORCA FOR THE EPIC VISTAS AND TOTAL ISOLATION OF THE SERRA DE TRAMUNTANA MOUNTAINS





Ron Howard's latest blockbuster. In the Heart of the Sea, recreates the ill-fated 1819 journey of the whaling ship Essex from Nantucket to the South Pacific, where it was sunk by a sperm whale - an event that inspired Herman Melville's literary classic Moby-Dick. It stars Cillian Murphy and Chris Hemsworth, above, as well as La Gomera in the Canaries, which stands in for the Ecuadorean coast of the early 19th century. Howard and his crew were based in the island's sleepy fishing port of Playa de Santiago, and the surrounding Atlantic Ocean provided the backdrop for much of the action.



A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

Batten down the hatches – the mighty sea takes a starring role in two new films this month



In By the Sea, Angelina Jolie's character, Vanessa, takes long, wistful walks along the tops of dramatic cliffs with the blue waters of the Med swirling beneath her. The film, set in the 1970s, was written and directed by Jolie, stars her husband Brad Pitt, and navigates the choppy emotional waters encountered by a couple on a last-ditch, marriage-saving trip to France. But competing for attention are the dreamy vistas shot on the Maltese island of Gozo – for example, the incredibly scenic Mgarr ix-Xini beach. During filming, the Jolie-Pitts holed up for five months in one of the trulli in the grounds of the clifftop Hotel Ta'Cenc & Spa. AOIFE O'RIORDAIN 'By The Sea' is released on 11 December. 'In the Heart of the Sea' is released on 26 December. Doubles at the Hotel Ta'Cenc (+356 221 91000; www.tacenc.com) from £95



THE TRENDS TAKING OFF AND THOSE RUNNING OUT OF FUEL

XARRIVALS

ARMCHAIR TRAVEL

The bank-balance-friendly way to experience the dreamy islands of the Great Barrier Reef this January as David Attenborough's latest series lands on BBC One.

STARRY NIGHTS

Shine brightest on the Channel isle of Sark, which is the world's only Dark Sky Island – see them twinkle up close from its new observatory.

GILI ISLANDS

This tiny trio of sandy specks, a boat ride from Bali, are shaking off their backpacker image with the incredible smart hotel BASK, freshly opened on the teeniest of them all, Gili Meno.

X DEPARTURES

AIRPORT STOPOVERS

Instead get out and explore with IcelandAir, which offers go-getting itineraries across the island from 24 hours to seven days on a free-flight break en route to North America.

SUMMER OLYMPICS

Why wait for Rio when you can catch the Arctic Winter Games?
They are held on Greenland in March, and events include snowshoe races and the Alaskan high-kick competition.

LOFOTEN ISLANDS

The legions of *Frozen* fans are set to have a new course to sail: to the islands of the South Pacific as Disney's next animated princess-movie, the Polynesian *Moana*, hits our screens later this year.

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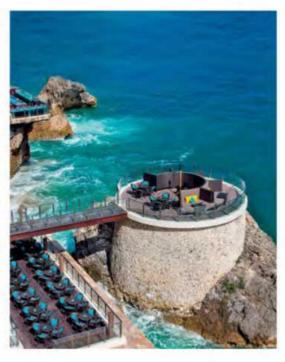


























ISLAND BEACH BARS

On the rocks or with water? When you're sipping by the sea, there's always time for one more

Top row, from left: on Ibiza, each piece of fabric at the whitewashed Cotton Beach Club is made from, as the name would suggest, 100 per cent cotton; Le Mahogany beach bar on Mauritius sits on a peninsula at the foot of Le Morne Brabant, a purple-headed crag; natural stone walls, low-slung sofas, rope hammocks and wickerwork feature at Scorpios on Mykonos; Nikki Beach Resort Koh Samui lives up to its international reputation of hosting great pool parties; at Shanti Maurice's Rum Shed on Mauritius, there are more than 180 varieties of the spirit from all over the world

Middle row, from left: the open-air Pool Bar on Laucala Island in Fiji is designed to resemble a shell and sits beside a 2,000-square-metre lagoon-style swimming pool; The Rock restaurant off Zanzibar can only be reached by foot at low tide; take in the view at Laucala Island over a bottle of the hotel's own coconut water or a fresh vitamin shooter; Bobby Dekeyser is the man behind high-design and rattan-furniture outfit Dedon, and is the founder of Dedon Island in the Philippines; two-storey joint Jellyfish is built using natural materials, such as the palm-thatched roof, in order to blend into the surroundings of Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic.

Bottom row, from left: Fanditha at One & Only Reethi Rah in the Maldives sources its furniture from India; Bali's minimalist Rock Bar is designed by Japanese studio SPIN and sits 14 metres above the sea, overlooking a vibrant stretch of coral reef; pumpkin-gourd lamps hang from the reed-thatched shack at Alemagou on Mykonos; swinging sofas and lobster-pot-inspired lights at Classified, a seaside café in Repulse Bay, Hong Kong; new to Ibiza in 2015, Ginger at Sa Punta dishes up sea-bass ceviche, tuna sashimi and tiger-prawn tempura. TABITHA JOYCE





My favourite island is... Amilla Fushi KATE WINSLET

The six-times Oscar nominee, who stars in the Steve Jobs biopic and new heist thriller Triple 9, makes a swift getaway to the Maldives, photographed by her husband Ned Rocknroll

'My NAME IS Sadaam Hussein,' said our butler with a cheeky grin and a friendly flash of white teeth. 'Yes it's true! May I take your bag madam?'

Freshly arrived on Amilla Fushi by seaplane from Malé, we were surrounded by sweet, eager staff handing out ice-cold face towels and fat glasses of something pink and juicy which tasted like coconut, only better. Sadaam high-fived the kids and dispatched the rest of the bags to our villa. Our new home turned out to be vast, modern and minimalist – like an urban five-star but without the noise and bustle – with deep ceramic baths, ocean-sized beds, and silent (and very welcome) air conditioning. Outside, we found not one but two swimming pools, surrounded by king-size sun beds, just a few feet from a powdery white-sand beach.

Just as we were thinking of finding something to eat, chef Nonky ('Pronounced donkey, but with an N') appeared in our private kitchen with trays of, well, options. Everything from Waygu beef to gigantic, grilled tiger prawns with garlic, chilli and lime, to sashimi of scallop and kingfish, sliced wafer thin, with a spicy dipping sauce. Delicious aromas filled the villa. Checking out the children's menu, I

BEST ISLANDS FOR FAMILIES





was delighted to find chilled prawns with avocado and mango salsa, as well as salt and pepper squid with watercress salad. Hooray, a nugget-free zone! This was warming my heart. One of my children is quite severely wheat intolerant, but having gluten-free options meant pizzanight treats could go ahead without a hitch.

I've been mountain climbing in Iceland, parasailing in New Zealand and dog sledding in the Arctic, but haven't been to many beach resorts. So I'm not really used to being waited on, or being expected to relax, which I'm not very good at and quite expert at avoiding. So I arrived on Amilla Fushi ready for some action and

myself on one of our daily dives with sharks and mantra rays, they were tearing around the new, off-the-charts-amazing tennis courts under the watchful eye of coach Tony. And there was always a willing band of male staff members ready to kick a football around with my son, who's a little on the shy side and was really made to feel part of a team. In fact it became a bit of a ritual, as he'd race out the door at five o'clock to join his friends like a newcomer welcomed by local villagers.

Somehow a massage also worked its way into our routine. The island's Javu Spa is a sanctuary of eucalyptus- and chamomile-scented calm where staff Soon we knew most staff members by name. We felt part of a family and even privy to some of its secrets. One day, after a 45-minute boat trip from the island we were dropped off with masks and fins and entered another world so breathtaking we felt we were in an animated film, such was the coral garden's surreal beauty. Each structure appeared to have tiny turrets and windows, with passageways and little corridors to swim down. Which we did, like water babies, surfacing between dives to shriek at each other in delight.

On the way home, we were treated to another rare sight: a school of dolphins decided to come and play, skimming

I STRUGGLE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH MY CHAKRAS, OR EVEN LISTEN TO MYSELF BREATHE FOR TOO LONG. I JUST START MAKING TO-DO LISTS

energetic yoga sessions. That's why I was initially suspicious of my teacher's floaty outfit and the rose petals scattered on my yoga mat: you see, I struggle to get in touch with my chakras, or even listen to myself breathe for too long (I just start making lists). And yet, after five consecutive days of 90-minute sessions, low and behold, it was happening. She was getting under my skin. Darn! I was indeed relaxing; the to-do lists in my head vanished.

And so Amilla Fushi was beginning to work its magic on us all. If my children weren't gliding alongside my husband and drift silently along its airy walkways, always with a smile. The Himalayan salt-crystal body scrubs left me feeling shiny and reborn, and the 90-minute full-body massage reduced me to a slippery, lavender-drenched, Bambi-like state.

The Kids' Club was a fabulous spot to take our toddler during massage time. It's perfectly positioned under tall, shady trees, with an immaculate, well-stocked play room and a safe, shallow pool. This warm, cocooning place was tended by gentle staff, without a hint of holiday-resort fakery or false enthusiasm.

alongside the boat at remarkable speed, leaping up and virtually over the bow. They seemed to giggle in tune with our own gleeful exclamations. And with chef Nonkey waiting at the villa ('It's lobster night!'), our last day proved to be a truly grand finale to our truly grand holiday. Cleveland Collection (+44 203 111 0805; www.clevelandcollection.co.uk) offers seven nights at Amilla Fushi from £7,899 for a family of four, half board, staying in a Lagoon House Sunset View. This includes flights, transfers, and one 50-minute spa experience per adult

PHOTOGRAPHS: NED ROCKNROLL; DANIEL WARD

KICKING UP THE SAND

Five more Maldives hotels to keep your crew ship-shape and mutiny-free

BEST FOR A RAFT OF ACTIVITIES

FOUR SEASONS RESORT MALDIVES AT LANDAA GIRAAVARU

The sugar-white beach is exquisite, the pancake-flat sea bluer than blue; indeed, everything seems all so Indian Ocean perfect it barely feels real. But children will find the wild, carefree environment exhilarating: they'll love cycling around the sandy paths under palm trees, and when more organised activities are needed there's plenty of choice. The Little Turtle Club for four- to 12-year-olds is a wonder-world where they can feed baby clownfish, spot lizards, go on wishing-tree walks and get wet in all manner of ways. For older children, highs include diving lessons and wind-surfing, and boat trips to help count manta rays. There's also a new programme, 'Mission: Landaa Giraavaru', an immersive adventure into the workings of the island, good for moody teens - the 14 mission levels will help develop skills from reporting to behind-the-scenes investigation and even bed-making. Other topics include energy conservation, endangered creatures and origami. And while everyone else is keeping busy, it's worth knowing that the overwater spa is one of the most holistic and spiritual anywhere, with chakra-healing and Ayurvedic rituals delivered by staff plucked from Kerala. DAISY FINER

Turquoise Holidays (+44 1494 678400; www.turquoise holidays.co.uk) offers seven nights for a family of four in a Beach Bungalow with pool from £6,899 half-board, including flights with Qatar Airways and seaplane transfers





BEST FOR BIG GET-TOGETHERS

ONE&ONLY REETHI RAH

At 10 years old this is practically a veteran in the atolls, yet life here is as high octane as ever. Over Christmas and New Year Reethi Rah is basically a members' club, with villas booked over a year in advance. Even regulars who have been visiting devotedly at Easter and over all three half terms still can't get in. Families come with other families, grandparents bring grandchildren, three, sometimes four generations book adjoining villas, taking over one of the 12 beaches for themselves. It's the hottest ticket. Parents think nothing of demolishing a magnum of Domaine Ott over lunch while their children bounce between the two volleyball pitches, tennis courts, the football pitch for guests vs staff matches, the pottery school for crafts and clay work, an artist's studio for painting classes and a kids' club jam-packed with excitement. Here is an entire, enormous island for them to free-wheel around, pedalling over mini bridges, past giant chess sets, cartwheeling in and out of the family pool, climbing and sliding on the sea inflatables and kayaking in the see-through canoes. Yet somehow One&Only has brilliantly married this family-friendly vibe with something ultra smart and glamorous. ISSY VON SIMSON Carrier (+44 161 492 1358; www.carrier.co.uk) offers seven nights from £6,920 for a family of four, half board, including flights and boat transfers

BEST ISLANDS FOR FAMILIES

BEST FOR PICKING UP NEW SKILLS

MAALIFUSHI BY COMO

This relative newcomer is a real asset to the smart COMO brand. Its sister hotel in the Maldives is popular with couples and this one is aimed at the next stage: parenting. At the kids' club, four- to 12-year-olds can grow crystals, fold palm leaves into parrots and learn Dhivehi (well, a few words anyway). But they're just as likely go hunting for geckos or shark spotting, in keeping with COMO's new 'Play' philosophy, which encourages children to take charge. It's all about boosting confidence. For teens, there are plenty of watersports and desert-island hijinks plus getting down with dad at family yoga sessions if they (or you) are up for it. With shady gardens and plunge pools, and just a few steps from the sand, the beach villas are best for families. There's a natural, understated vibe throughout, and children won't eat this healthily anywhere in the archipelago: coconut, cinnamon and almond porridge for breakfast, lentil cakes with crushed avocado for tea. But really the joy of Maalifushi lies in its sensational spa, where parents are likely to disappear and emerge with a much higher patience threshold. Which let's face it, means a marvellously relaxing time for everyone. LEO BEAR Abercrombie & Kent (+44 1242 547708; www.abercrombiekent.co.uk) offers seven nights in a garden room from £2,225 per adult and £695 per child, including flights, seaplane transfers and breakfast



BEST FOR STORYBOOK ESCARADES

SONEVA FUSHI

The original 'no news, no shoes' Maldivian holiday was dreamt up by owners Sonu and Eva Shivdasani (him a former Etonian, her an ex-Vogue cover star) long before anyone else thought of barefoot luxury. But this place is also brilliant at keeping everyone happy on what is essentially a 100-acre fantasy family home with a jungle cinema and observatory where kids can spy galaxies far, far away with Ali Shameem, the only certified astronomer in the country. There's also a turtle-spotting beach and an ice-cream parlour (Eva's cheesecake flavour is devilishly good) and a treetop, Swiss Family Robinson-style restaurant reached by a wobbly rope bridge. The latest addition is The Den, the biggest children's zone in the Indian Ocean. Entered through a tunnel, and kitted out with clocks and treasure maps, it hides an exhaustive list of fabulous playthings: a pirate ship, jungle zip-line, water slide, DJ room and hands-on kitchen. For all Soneva Fushi's thrills, it can also be a soothing balm. MIKE MACEACHERAN Scott Dunn (+44 20 8682 5060; www.scottdunn.com) offers seven nights from £2,190 per person, in a Crusoe Villa, including flights, transfers and breakfast

BEST FOR CHILDCARE COVER

PER AQUUM NIYAMA

The clever Per Aguum group has clocked that the honeymooners at Huvafen Fushi may want to return to the Maldives with some additions to their party. That's where sister hotel Niyama comes in. Staff smile at sticky fingers, scoop up tantrummy toddlers and debate football teams with teens. The new island, Play, has at its heart a gleaming kids' club, run by an unflappable Scott Dunntrained team. With circus-top-themed rooms, a marathon of activities, the softest sand-floored playground and a water park, it's a spirited hideaway for children, a refuge from the equatorial sun. For parents of smaller ones, the fact that the club takes kids from 12 months old is worth ordering another gin and tonic for. For those with tech-obsessed tweens, there's a separate games zone with Xboxes, computers and an awesome pair of simulator rooms: one for cinema screenings and one with kit for golf, shooting and goal-scoring practice. And, of course, there are the beaches, the snorkelling, banana boats and dhoni trips. There's not a chance in hell anyone will get bored. ISSY VON SIMSON Carrier (+44 161 492 1358; www.carrier.co.uk) offers seven nights from £6,230 per family full board, including flights and transfers



GRAINNE MCBRIDE, DEPUTY CHIEF SUB-EDITOR, RATES THE IRISH ISLAND OF THORAI FOR ITS POITIN-SMUGGLING TALES AND HIGH-TEMPO TRAD MUSIC SESSIONS



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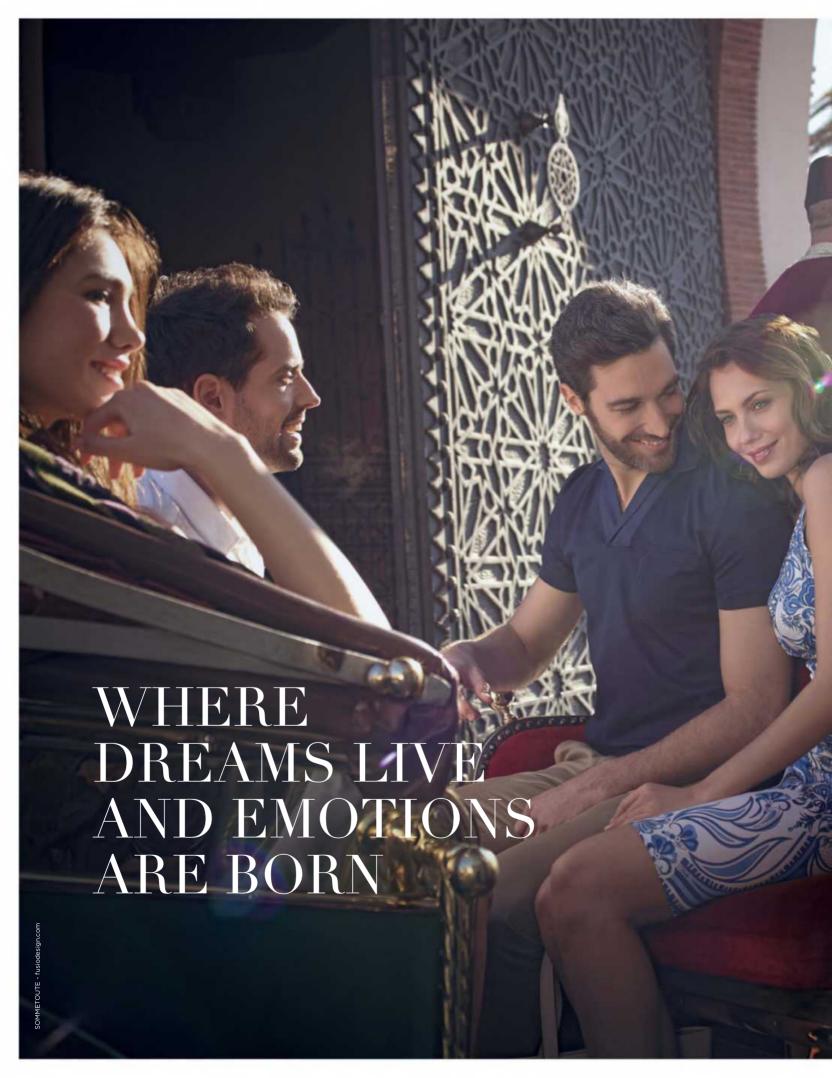
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ISLANDHOTELS

Sri Lanka St Barth's Ireland Dennis Quaid's favourite crashpads

EDITED BY PETER BROWNE

EXCLUSIVE FIRST REVIEW

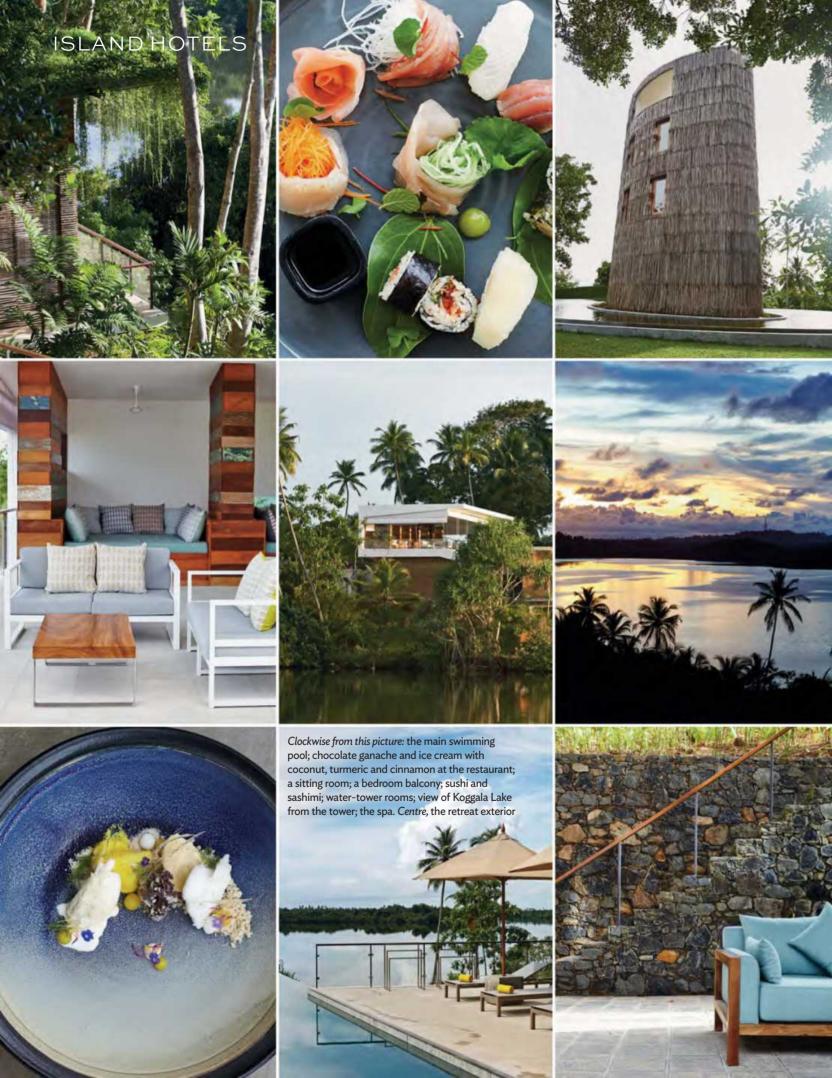
CURVE BALL

On a lakeside in Sri Lanka, a firebrand health retreat is breaking all the rules and bringing a new twist to the country's colonial-style hotel scene. E Jane Dickson gets the inside scoop. Photographs by Tim Evan-Cook



koggala lake is dark glass. Pre-dawn, the jungle on the far shore is smudgy with steam, but in the mirror-lake, each frond is distinctly drawn. The sun rises, the image inverts. It's important to catch the precise moment when the lake gives the day back its edges. It helps that I can practise this ritual from my bed at the just-opened Tri sanctuary in Sri Lanka's deep south, though I didn't come here for enlightenment. I first came to this island as a student, for the beach parties, and have come back again and again for the sense-drenching beauty of its interior. Spiritual retreats, dripping incense and earnestness bring me out in hives. But Tri, 20 minutes from the boho buzz of Galle, is my kind of retreat: a place where sybarites and soul seekers can shake down together. Its British owner, Rob Drummond, has planted deep roots in his adopted community. A photographer and dedicated yogi, he has been based in Asia since 2000 and for nine years lived in an exquisitely restored Dutch colonial house in Galle. Steeped in local culture and

Fluent in Sinhalese, Drummond was energetic in the post-tsunami regeneration of the south. When Douglas, his local fixer and right-hand man at Tri – someone with a smile so expressive you're halfway through lunch before you realise he's not speaking English – invites me to his home for a meal, there is no hint of a laid-on 'experience'. It is a genuine case of 'any friend of Rob's...' And Rob treads lightly on the land he loves. No trees were harmed in the making of Tri. Eleven rooms and an elliptical water tower are stealthed into the shoreline with cinnamon-branch cladding, a by-product of the spice industry,



➤ and green roofs are planted with lemongrass. Working with A00, a Shanghai-based sustainable design firm, Drummond devised a ground plan that respects the naturally occurring mathematical ratio seen, for example, in conch shells. Spooling out from an ancient banyan on the promontory's highest point, the whole development describes an elegant Fibonacci spiral.

'I wouldn't call it a concept. It's just what the land offered up,' says Drummond.

Geoffrey Bawa, who defined resort style on the island with landmark buildings such as the Bentota Beach Hotel (1969) and the astonishing, kilometre-long Heritance Kandalama (1994).

'Ten years ago,' says Drummond, 'there were about eight decent hotels here. Now I can't keep up with them, but not many architects break out too far from Geoffrey's kind of thing, which was great for its time, and actually, a lot are still building in some

out as we go along. What I've observed from years teaching yoga in places like Goa and Ibiza is that hedonists and party animals, yogis and healers are very often drawn to the same spot: beautiful places where the spirit comes alive. For some that can mean dancing all night, for others it can be sitting in meditation. I hope we'll have people doing both here.'

Healthy eating at Tri, however, has never been less penitential. The inventive

'HEDONISTS AND PARTY ANIMALS, YOGIS AND HEALERS ARE OFTEN DRAWN TO THE SAME SPOT: BEAUTIFUL PLACES WHERE THE SPIRIT COMES ALIVE'

'I'm not really a hotelier; I'm not about maximising profit. But I believe that if you have something special, and do something special with it, then there is an impossible-to-calculate premium. We had an expert come down during construction, and he identified 51 species of bird, 18 of butterfly and 19 of dragonfly. Why would I do anything that's going to harm such a spectacular environment?'

Melding high principles and high design, Tri is at the cutting edge of Asia's new-wave hotel design. Twenty-first-century Sri Lanka has pulled away from the long shadow of colonialism but, in general, the hotel industry has been slow to follow. At Tri, there's not a potted palm or planter's chair to be seen. Architecturally, Drummond was keen to move the story on from the Tropical Modernism of

variant of Dutch colonial. That's lovely, too, but I think that if you have the chance to build your own place, it's slightly sad if all you're going to do is copy something that was done 300 years ago.'

At Tri, billowing muslins and graphic screen-prints from Galle Fort's fabric store Tallentire House keep villas on the soft side of minimalism, while in the outdoor living room, reclaimed jack-wood beams and paintwork rubbed back to a lichen-sheen add warmth and character. I suspect the hotel's well-developed pleasure principle is driven by Rob's wife and co-owner, Lara Baumann, founder of Quantum Yoga. At five months pregnant, she can slink into the kind of pretzel poses seen only on wall paintings, but she's no hard-liner: 'Are we a hotel or a wellness spa?' she wonders. 'I guess we'll figure that

menus are laced with local superfoods: *kurakkan* is a tasty kind of millet (truly) and *gotu kola* is a clover-like herb set to be the new spirulina. Every dish has at least three ingredients I have never heard of: koppara fish with wahoo (a kind of aromatic bark) sounds like a good time on a plate, and turns out to be exactly that.

Dusk fills the lake like spilled ink. Peacocks, elegant and entitled, scatter lesser birds from their roost, as monitor lizards blunder in the undergrowth like drunk party guests. Each has their place at Tri.

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My favourite island is... Fernandina

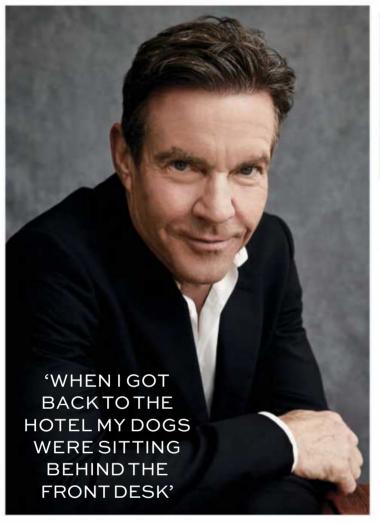
HORATIO CLARE

Adventurer and Somerset Maugham Award-winning author

'If you're alone, as Petula Clark observed, and life is making you lonely, you can always go downtown. If you are so fortunate as to

have ever been to the Galápagos, and you're feeling low, then you can always go back to the island of Fernandina. The youngest of the archipelago, Fernandina is a new world within a new world, pristine (no introduced species) and still growing volcanically. "We seem to be brought somewhat near to that great fact – that mystery of mysteries – the first appearance of new beings on this earth," wrote Charles Darwin of what he saw here. I saw the wind ruffling the glint-green manzanillo and mangroves, and the lava-black marine iguanas digesting on rocks, and the fur seals, and the rays jumping in the channel like cannonballs, and boobies with blue feet. I saw frigate birds like pirate hang-gliders, and one night, when a ruddy moon lit the slopes of the volcano, I stared back through time to the beginnings of things. Visitor numbers on the Galápagos are strictly limited and by the time you reach them, via Madrid and Quito in my case, you will feel that woozy disorientation which comes with circling half the globe. It won't add up to a very economical trip until you factor in the experience. And then, surely, you will know that you have been given one of life's great gifts: you will have seen something of the world as it was before our species denatured it, and having seen that, you will, marvellously, never be quite the same again.'







TURTLE BAY RESORT, OAHU, HAWAII

'This place is on the North Shore of Oahu, which has really big waves in winter. It's amazing to watch if you're a surfer. I'm a latecomer to surfing. I didn't start until my fifties, but I'm making up for lost time. The hotel is very chilled out, totally different from the crowded south side of the island.' www.turtlebayresort.com. Doubles from about £340



LIZARD ISLAND, GREAT BARRIER REEF, AUSTRALIA

'This is a great hotel. I was looking for somewhere to get away from everything, and this one fit the bill perfectly. But on top of that, it had one of those honesty bars, which is always handy. It's the sort of place where you can see, or choose not to see, people; hang, or not hang. There are lots of water sports and probably the best snorkelling I've ever come across.' www.lizardisland.com.au. Doubles from about £790



CROSBY STREET HOTEL, NEW YORK

'I like this hotel because it's low-key, the staff are friendly and professional, and it's in a great location. Plus, I've had French bulldogs for the last seven or eight years and here they take really good care of them when we are in New York.' www.firmdalehotels.

Com. Doubles from about £450



FOUR SEASONS RESORT MAUI AT WAILEA, HAWAII

'I usually hate to sit by pools, but here I could just sit all day and play Scrabble, or Squabble as my wife and I call it. The kids can do their own thing. I first came here about 25 years ago. The area around the hotel has got so hectic, but I don't notice because I'm too busy playing Scrabble by the pool.' www.four seasons.com. Doubles from about £370

Dennis Quaid stars in 'Truth' which is out in early 2016

PHOTOGRAPH: MAARTEN DE BOER/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

david annand, men's editor, would gladly be a castaway on sardinia where he'd eat tiramisu every day and get contentedly fat

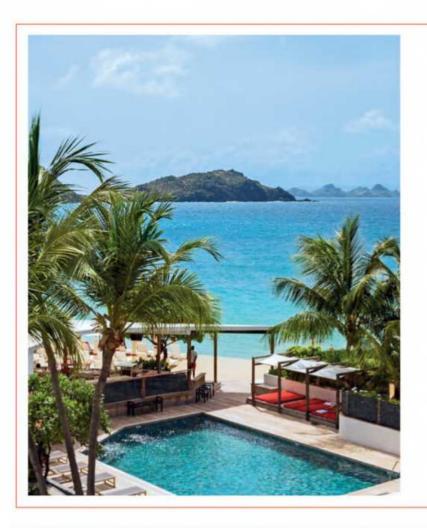


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SERENE SMOOTHY

HOTEL TAIWANA There used to be a slightly off-putting swagger to this

hotel, which once too often claimed its £35 lentil salad was the world's most expensive. Now they've kept the salad but slashed the price, and everything else feels a lot more accessible and laid-back too. The savvy trio of French, British and American owners means the guests. who often seem to know each other, are a congenial lot and don't necessarily wear the St Barth's uniform of Ralph Lauren shirts and Vilebrequin trunks. The hotel itself has had a decluttering redesign by Parisian architect Cyprien Bru, who has refreshed the rooms with neutral linens, bleached woods and continuous room-to-balcony decking, with the odd flash of red to pep things up. The suites - more like super-slick apartments - have between one and four bedrooms, many with plunge pools or Jacuzzis, and almost all with sensational views of Flamands Bay, surely one of the island's best. Distractions include an offshoot of Poupette St Barth, the cutest boutique in town, contemporary art and photography from Space gallery, and the Tayo concept store selling Mara Hoffman dresses and Aurélie Bidermann jewellery. There's still no spa but the gym has a new detox cocktail list including the Bloody Fresh (a Bloody Mary made with the ripest tomatoes). +590 590 298008; www.hoteltaiwana.com. Doubles from about £380

REFRESHED CLASSIC

EDEN ROCK

Just when we thought this place couldn't get any better, owners David and Jane Matthews have gone and done it again. They may not manage the gig anymore - it's in the hands of the seriously selective Oetker Collection - but they're hardly holding back. This time the place has had more of a rejig than one of the regular refurbs and suddenly it all makes perfect sense. The reception has moved from the top of the rock to ground level, where it always should have been, leaving a sensational space for the new Christopher Columbus Suite, with 360-degree views and plenty of Carrara marble, set to rival the hotel's £11,000- a-night Villa Rockstar. The beach bar where Serge Gainsbourg songs play has been given a facelift and the much-adored lunchtime restaurant Sand Bar is now open for casual suppers of crispy salmon sushi and black-truffle pizzas. Jean-Georges Vongerichten's On the Rocks restaurant has also had a boost with the arrival of chef Eric Desbordes and sommelier Marco Pelletier, both from Le Bristol Paris (another Oetker outpost). Expect sautéed lobster in a fenugreek broth, seared scallops with pumpkin seeds and roast chicken with slow-cooked crayfish. And if your heart is set on privacy but you long for a dash of Eden Rock's polish, Oetker also manages a collection of villas on the island, right, all with a 24-hour concierge service and entrance to the hotel's restaurants and beach. +590 590 297999; www.edenrockhotel.com. Doubles from about £625





SAVING GRACE

HOTEL LE TOINY

Charlie and Mandie Vere Nicoll, former owners of St-Barth Isle de France (sold for a mint to LVMH), couldn't sit still so they bought another property on the island. And a good thing too: St Barth's needs some British eccentricity. Charlie is the local vicar (I kid you not) who can often be seen quaffing Champagne a few hours after holding mass. ('Why not?' he says, 'Church and hotels are both hospitality.') For years Le Toiny has been known as the hotel furthest from town; perhaps not the greatest of accolades, but a total overhaul will turn it into something special. By 2017 there will be 23 rooms (up from 15) in the 24-hectare grounds and interiors doyenne Bee Osborn, who designed Isle de France for the couple, is using natural materials - figured sycamore, petrified wood and bleached teak - with a touch of glamour; the four-metre bar will be crafted from oyster shells, marble, mother-of-pearl and mirror. Best of all will be the sandy beach (unusual for this rocky side of the island) with loungers and hammocks set in natural landscaping. There are plans to build walking trails on the distant headland, which is a protected area, and American singer-songwriter and keen surfer Jimmy Buffett, Charlie's mate, has vowed to launch a Toiny Cup surf competition here. +590 590 278888; www.letoiny.com. Doubles from about £450

+ ONES TO WATCH

Maisons and Hotels Sibuet is taking over the former Hotel François Plantation to open Villa Marie, a clutch of 22 cottages above Flamands Bay, in November 2016, a sister property to the group's exquisite hotel in St Tropez. And everyone is talking about the new wellness retreat, Le Barthélemy, set to launch this year on Grand Cul-de-Sac with Crème de la Mer treatments, a spa bar and interiors by the brilliant Sybille de Margerie, who designed the Mandarin Oriental in Paris and Cheval Blanc Courchevel.



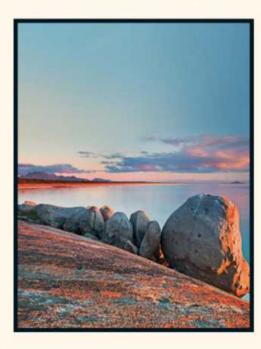
My favourite island is... Flinders

NICHOLAS SHAKESPEARE

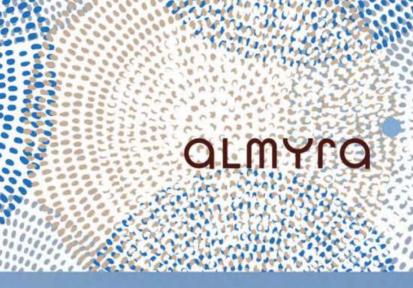
Definitive Chatwin biographer and BAFTA-winning documentary maker

'A bleak spine of rock springing sheer from Bass Strait, 65km long and 30km wide, Flinders Island is to Tasmania what Tasmania is to the Australian mainland. As a young man told me in one of its few pubs:

"Sometimes you think in Tasmania: this is the best kept secret. Then on Flinders you think: this is the best kept secret of that secret." The island is immeasurably mournful, as the place where the last Tasmanian aborigines allowed themselves to be relocated in exchange for their ancestral lands. And it's exceptionally windy – scattered about with doubled-back paperbarks that are sculpted by the Roaring Forties to resemble trees from a children's book. But Flinders also has a unique beauty, as unique in its way as its ice-blue gemstones (called Killecrankie diamonds, but actually topaz) that I've fossicked from Tanners Bay; or the squadrons of low-flying peacocks that at sunset stream out of the tea trees, sometimes into one's windscreen. If the island hits you, it can strike hard. Bewitched, my spellbound father was momentarily but seriously tempted to sell all he had and buy an eco-friendly health resort on Trousers Point. I'm slightly glad he didn't, but only slightly.'



PHOTOGRAPHS: PIERRE CARREAU; STEVEN FRIEDMAN/AURORA/CORBIS















THE WEEKENDER

INIS MEAIN ARANISLANDS, IRELAND

WHY STAY? To be far removed from the rest of the world: this is the edge of the edge of Europe, teetering on the vast, churning waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

WHY NOW? Because it books up fast and you'll want to make sure you get a room when it reopens on 21 March.

WHAT IS IT? An extraordinary take on the remote-shack vernacular, this is rugged-island living reimagined for the style-savvy traveller with pared-back, intelligent simplicity. Inis Meáin is the middle and least visited of the trio of the Aran Islands off Ireland's west coast.

BEHIND THE SCENES It's owned and run by Ruairí and Marie-Thérèse de Blacam, a husband-and-wife team with an easy, welcoming charm. Ruairí grew up on Inis Meáin, and after several years working as a chef in Dublin, Italy and France, the island's pull proved too strong

and the couple returned and opened the restaurant-with-rooms in 2007. Part Italian-style *agriturismo*, part contemporary safari lodge, the hotel was designed by Ruairí's architect uncle, who founded one of Ireland's leading practices. The duo's inspiration came from their many travels. The exterior echoes the austere stonewalls that lattice the island and is one of its most arresting features.

SLEEP All five rooms have a retreat-like sense of tranquillity and are done in a spare but warm style: iroko carpentry, oak floors and walls hung with black-and-white photographs of the islands. A single, slim window runs the length of each room, giving wide-angle panoramas of the coast. Bathrooms are small but functional, tiled in polished black granite with powerful showers but no baths. There are fishing rods, bicycles, deck chairs, binoculars and beach towels, but no TVs or telephones: the landscape is your entertainment.

EAT Ruairí mans the stoves and his cooking is simple but skilful. Guests sit down at 8pm for a four-course set feast that changes daily, but there's no pressure to mingle. Freshly landed lobster, seabass and vegetables from the hotel's garden (in a beetroot carpaccio, for example) all appear. Lunch is provided in a backpack with a flask of soup and some still-warm foccacia to take wherever you wander.

WHO COMES HERE? The hotel attracts a diverse bunch from local creatives, chefs, and CEOs to curious travellers from further afield. At dinner you could be sitting next to a retired couple from Dublin or some loved-up honeymooners from New York. Almost half are returning guests.

WE LIKE Waking up to breakfast delivered silently in a custom-made teak box. There is still-warm brown bread and fruit cake, homemade muesli, yoghurt, mackerel paté, cured salmon, a luscious chocolate pot, and a boiled egg, which even has its own Aran jumper.

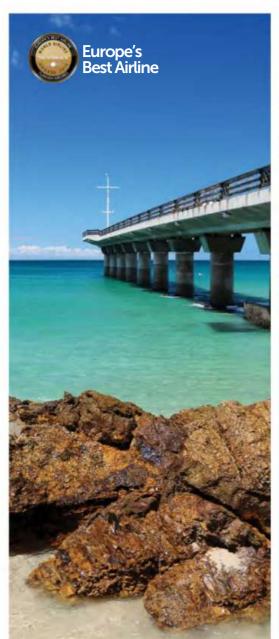
WE DON'T LIKE It's all about the views here, but some windows have no blinds, so chances are you will be up with the sunrise. Bring an eye mask. +353 86 826 6026; www.inismeain.com. Doubles from about £170, including breakfast and transfers AOIFE O'RIORDAIN

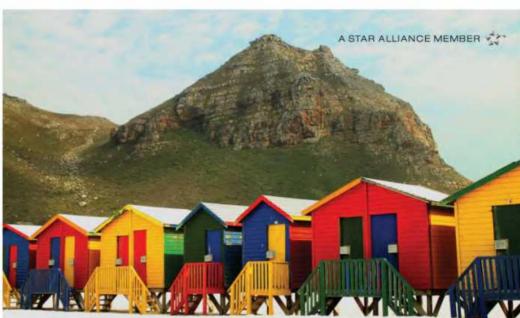


OUT AND ABOUT

Hike around and discover the island's towering cliffs and deserted beaches; you can wander for hours without seeing a soul. Visit playwright JM Synge's thatched cottage, stock up on merino and cashmere pieces at Inis Meáin Knitting Company's factory shop, above, and savour a quiet pint in the island's only pub, Teach Osta.

PETER BROWNE, SENIOR EDITOR, LOVES THE CAPE COD CLASSIC NANTUCKET FOR ITS MISTY MORNINGS AND AUSTERELY BEAUTIFUL, GREY-SHINGLED HOUSES

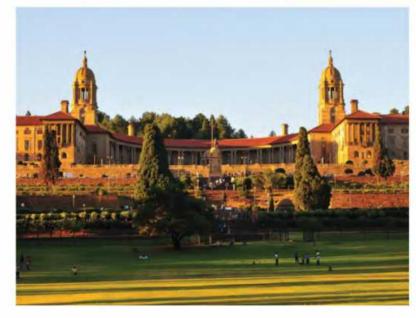




Fly to South Africa with Turkish Airlines

Discover harmony in diversity



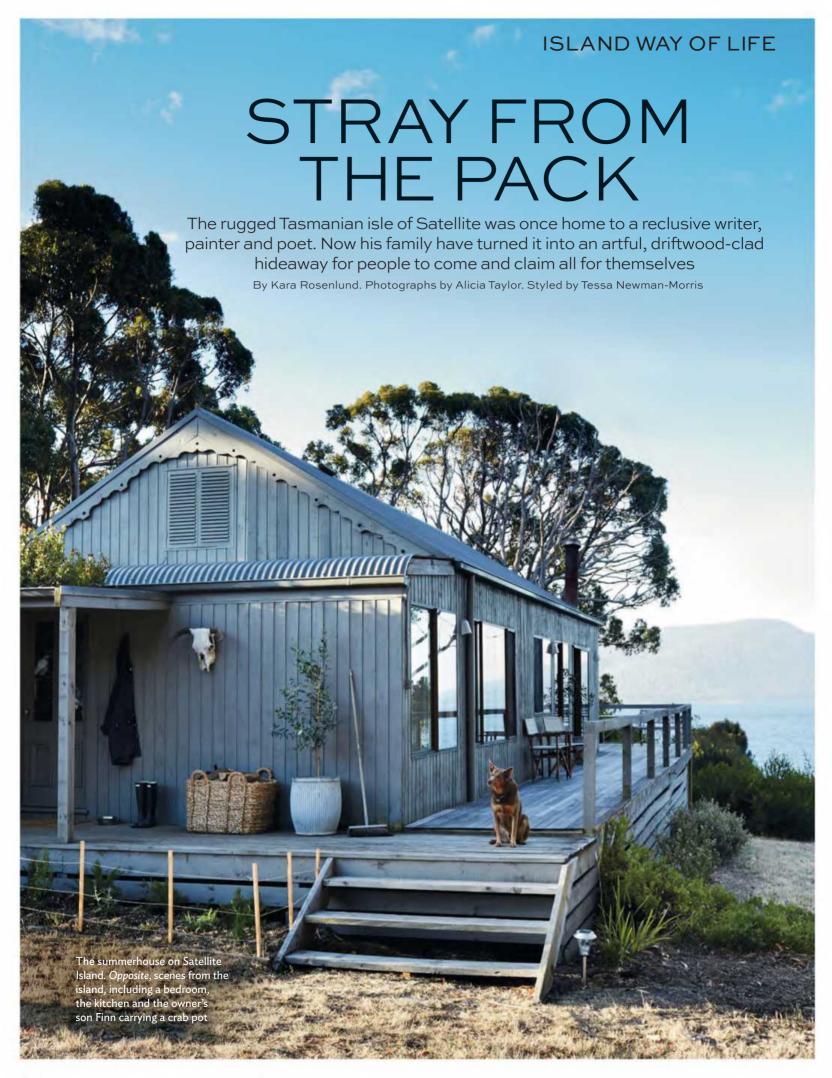




WIDEN YOUR W O R L D









HE FIRST TIME I heard about Satellite Island was during a trip to Tasmania last year. The name would be whispered to me frequently, as if it were a secret travelling on the wind: a family-owned private island in an unspoilt wilderness with vivid sea life and native birds, which you could hire out in its entirety. It's the sort of thing that gets the heart pounding.

The 34-hectare whale-shaped landmass sits in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel off Bruny Island. It's actually only a 45-minute hop from Hobart, but the landscape here quickly turns primitive, and the setting feels thrillingly remote. This is the home of Kate and Will Alstergren and their three teenage sons, who split their time between the rugged outpost and Melbourne.

Satellite originally belonged to Will's uncle, Ian Alstergren. He was mesmerised by the raw allure of the place, and the way it reminded him of his native Norway. He never married, nor had children, and lived on the island alone after he bought it in the 1960s. But it was his muse, his inspiration, perhaps even his great love. It was here that he indulged his passions as a writer, painter and poet, and where he started one of the first organic salmon farms in the region. In his will he left his home to his nephew, in the hope that it would be in safe hands.

Opening up Satellite and sharing it with guests wasn't the first choice for the new owners. Before Kate and Will took over there were very few visitors. It lacked obvious charm and was littered with industrial machinery from the salmon farm. Kate admits the first year was so overwhelming and the place demanded so much of their attention that she and Will considered selling up. It really made no sense, as their life was based 400 miles away across the Bass Strait. But they persevered and, in the gradual process of transforming Satellite Island from a working farm into an exclusive private retreat, they have also fallen under its influence.

The place has a certain pull about it, a way of drawing you in. 'You have to let things run in their own time here and not try to fight it,' says Kate. 'The island slowed me down, so I could see clearly, and as a result it has given our family so much, nothing tangible or physical, rather more emotional – a feeling.' Part

of this was responding to the rhythms of nature, which was what Kate did when she renovated the summerhouse, the main building on the northernmost tip of the island. She pulled down the bullnose roof from the veranda, allowing daylight to pour into the house after three decades in stale darkness. The floorboards were sanded back and the walls painted white,

a barge, as were a flock of sheep, a herd of deer, a brood of chickens and guinea fowl and even a bulldozer. They also shipped in a manager to be on call round the clock who can set up a bonfire on top of the hill at sunset or help you shuck oysters and dive for crayfish.

But really this is an understated and back-to-basics home. It doesn't demand

THE LANDSCAPE HERE QUICKLY TURNS PRIMITIVE AND THE SETTING FEELS THRILLINGLY REMOTE

so the bright Australian sunshine could bounce around. She brought the colour palettes of the outdoors in: the greys of the rock shelf, the blues of the smooth pebbles on the beach and the pale hues of the sun-bleached driftwood. Previously unappreciated sandstone shelves suddenly fitted the scheme perfectly, echoing the textures of the sea cliffs that ring the island. The collected shells, antlers, eagle feathers and maps scattered around all help to tell the story of the location.

Favourite pieces of furniture have been transported from the Alstergren's family home in Melbourne to Tasmania and then across the channel. A beautiful 19th-century Scandinavian dresser with its original glass was brought over on

too much. Its purpose is to offer shelter from the elements that the Tasmanian coast throws at you. The weather is the most challenging thing about life here. You need to watch the tides, know the winds and be patient, 'If the conditions are too wild to get things done and the channel is too choppy, then we wait,' says Kate. 'It's that simple – you have to be fluid, relaxed and just let go of everything else.' Spending time on Satellite means experiencing a quietness that has a way of connecting you to what is real and, more importantly, silencing what's not. In such a switched-on modern age, this must be the truest luxury.

From about £2,940 per night, sleeps 12. www.satelliteisland.com.au

WHERE TO PICK UP THE BEST SUPPLIES

Satellite Island owner Kate Alstergren's insider shopping list



'In Hobart I drop into **Daci & Daci Bakers** on Murray Street, just near the ferry to MONA (the Museum of Old and New Art), for coffee and to stock up on bread, biscuits and sausage rolls. Then I visit **Jackman and McRoss** on Hampden Road in historic Battery Point for some of their delicious lamb-and-rosemary pies. On the drive south towards the island, there are plenty of roadside fruit and vegetable sellers with fantastic fresh

produce, such as **Oyster Cove** and **Merediths**

Orchard in Margate – perfect if you have forgotten something. I always get smoked ocean trout from Roger Scales at his **Woodbridge Smokehouse**. It's a local speciality. Once you have taken the car ferry across to Bruny Island, stop off at **Get Shucked** for a dozen or so of Joe Bennett's fabulous oysters. And then just around the next corner, pause for a quick lunch and a glass of wine at **Bruny Island Cheese Company**, and buy Nick Haddow's delicious cheeses for your stay on the island and to take home – it's the last stop before Satellite.'

Boardwalk empire

Antonia Quirke eavesdrops in New York's Coney Island, a place for dreamers and fun seekers

'IN THE SIDESHOW IS

A BOA CONSTRICTOR

CONTROLLED

EXCLUSIVELY BY

MIND POWER'

'WE WERE LIFEGUARDS...' nods Al, 'yeah, we're talkin' a long time ago.' It's coolish Wednesday at Coney Island with Al and Jay, sitting on a wall under the terrifying, near-century-old wooden Cyclone rollercoaster. 'That pier used to be different,' points Al, waggling his finger west. It used to be straight out. It was a T.' Jay scoffs: 'No, it was a cross. A cross.'

Within hearing distance, in a semi-derelict street perpendicular to the Boardwalk, an oily compère - hair slicked smooth as an otter – rolls passers-by into a sideshow with a noir-like faux jollity. 'You won't believe what we've got in here! Rub your eyes when you see the Victorian splendour of our tattooed wonder! Hundreds if not thousands of tattoos all over her body from the top of her cranial regions to the bottom of her pedal

extremities!' Also on today's slate: a boa constrictor controlled exclusively by mind power and the 'sword-swallowing sensation from Salt Lake City'. All perfectly normal for around here. 'This ain't no Sunday school', went an early ad for Coney. The entrepreneurs who built the first amusement parks on this far tip of Brooklyn in the 1870s were railroad

beach. 'And it's a good mix of fresh water from the Hudson, and salt water. Less salinity. Better for swimming.' Jay raises his eyebrows: 'Where d'you drag all this up from?'

So the railroad men piled all their money into the project. It was to be an electric eden with a million lights that could

be seen 30 miles out to sea, a city of fire. They reconstructed the Swiss Alps with refrigerated trails in actual snow and sailed gondolas through a pre-Vegas fake Venice. The most popular exhibit was of 600 veterans of the Boer War recreating battles in a stadium. That and the 800 premature newborns in display incubators.

'It's famous,' pitches in Al. 'Even people from Europe know Coney Island now.' But today it's pretty quiet. Peering through the wire at the parked and empty Cyclone carriages earlier, I'd spotted my all-time favourite sign: 'Secure teeth, wigs and glasses'. Once, on the ride with my friend David – as the twister exploited its g-force at 60 miles an hour and ancient cogs groaned – we'd joined in with the Hasidic family behind us,

> suddenly overwhelmed with the task of staying alive, repeating: 'This cannot be legal. This cannot be legal...' Then that nauseating dimpling of the ground as we hit and pulled away.

Today the Cyclone is closed. A jogger stops to attempt a bench press. Just how affectionate does anybody feel for the place these days? I ask Al. After a

couple of Nathan's hot dogs and an afternoon staring into the wind, he and Jay are feeling plump and presbyopic; contentedly forgetful. 'I didn't realise until after I turned 60,' Jay says, 'how little knowledge you actually need to get by. All those facts about salinity! Man, the world turns without them.' 'I'm not in love with it exactly,' admits Al. 'But you know what? When we were young we had such a good time down here. And that was it.'

men: dreamers with a passion for wax houses and dime museums. 'The jetties stop the current,' says Al, nodding towards the



My favourite island is... Earth

SIMON ARMITAGE

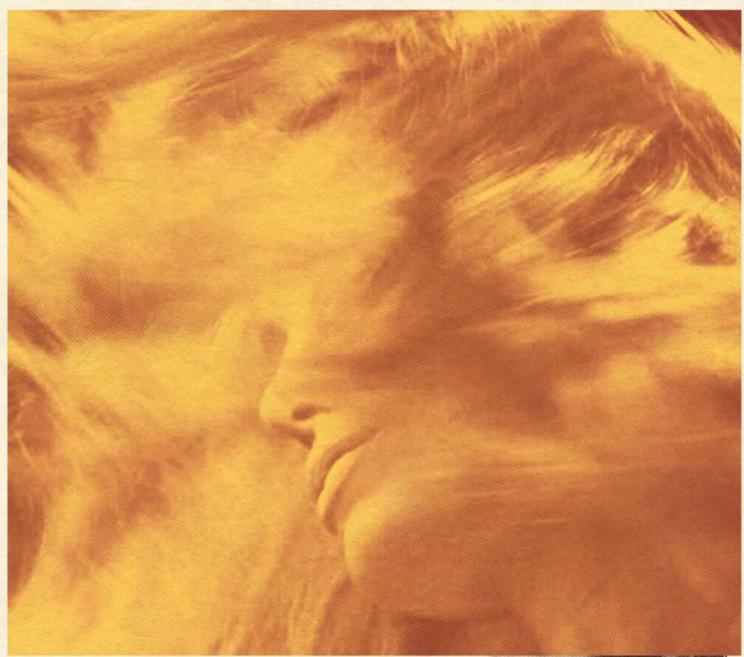
Poet and playwright who appears alongside Orwell on the school syllabus

'We are all island dwellers whether we know it or not. Britain is an island, as we are constantly being told, and the fact that it comprises three

separate countries doesn't seem to disqualify it from the category. By the same token, residents of Moscow are also inhabitants of an island, one which extends to Gibraltar in the west, Mumbai in the south and as far east as the Korean peninsula. On those occasions when the Bering Sea freezes over, Muscovites share their island with the whole of the Americas, right down to the tip of Tierra del Fuego. It's also worth remembering that Australia is joined to New Zealand by land, and to every other country, but land with surface water lying in its folds and depressions. Robinson Crusoe's island, Alcatraz, Easter Island, Pitcairn, Iceland, Ireland, Ithaca, Tresco, Atlantis... An island is an emotionally and culturally determined location, as much a mental construct as a geographical one, formed by sentiment and story. The only true island, I'd argue, is planet Earth. We exist in 360 spherical degrees of isolation, cut off by virtue of distance, time, atmosphere and gravity, unique in chemistry and personnel, and despite all philosophical speculation, scientific modelling and mathematical theorising to the contrary, still utterly alone.' Simon Armitage's book 'Paper Aeroplane: Selected Poems 1989-2014' (Faber; £14.99) is out now



PHOTOGRAPHS: TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES; JEREMY SUTTON-HIBBERT/GETTY IMAGES



BRAD PITT ANGELINA JOLIE PITT

By the Sea

Written and Directed by ANGELINA JOLIE PITT



In Cinemas December II





The Neighbourhoods

AS HEAD OF BIKE DESIGN AT SHINOLA, WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE OF MAKING BIKES IN AMERICA?

Component production moving offshore. There are no tyres, multiple-gear hubs, derailleurs or shifters made in the USA. Virtually all manufacturing has moved to Asia. The reality of component manufacturing dictates that we buy some parts from Asia, simply because they are not available from any other source.

WHO MAKES THE FRAMES?

The heart and soul of a bike is the frame and we knew that in order to bring this kind of industry back to Detroit, we'd have to enlist in the help of true craftsmen. So when we looked for an experienced frame manufacturer, we looked to Wisconsin and the Waterford facilities.

The bike business is relatively small as an industry. I've known Richard Schwinn and Waterford for many years, so he took my call. He delivered the first frames in 2012, in record time, which was amazing.

WHAT SETS THESE FRAMES APART?

They are properly engineered and alloyed with chromium and manganese, drawn and butted and low-temperature brazed by the hands of a craftsman. The ride that a light, steel frame delivers is subtle yet revelatory. It is comfortable and stable, with just enough give to soak up road bumps, but stiff enough to transfer energy efficiently. It can be ridden forever, as its fatigue life will outlast yours. We like to think Ignaz would be proud, not only of our bikes and how they ride, but where we are making them.



DETROIT IS KNOWN AS MOTOR CITY FOR ITS AUTO INDUSTRY, BUT IS IT CYCLE-FRIENDLY?

There are over 170 miles of bike lanes in Detroit with plans for a 26-mile pedestrian and bike pathway encircling the city (if the funding gets figured out).

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE CITY CYCLE ROUTE?

Dequindre Cut to the riverfront.

BEST LANDMARKS VIEWED FROM TWO WHEELS?

Michigan Central Station and the Heidelberg Project on the East side.

BEST PLACES TO STOP AND REFUEL?

Eastern Market and Great Lakes Coffee.

FAVOURITE NEIGHBOURHOODS?

Midtown and Cass Corridor where our flagship Shinola store and Willy's are located. I also like Heidelberg, Corktown, Indian Village and West Village.

EAT Mexican street food at Alley Taco, handmade dishes at Bucharest Grill or refuel at Mercury Burger Bar, Supino Pizzeria and American Coney Island.

DRINK at the **Bronx Bar** (an old-timey haunt); settle down in Corktown's cosy **UFO Factory** or downtown's **Grand Trunk**

Pub: for craft beer and cocktails head to the intimate Sugar House or nearby LJ's Lounge, and for a caffeine fix it's in-store at Commonwealth Coffee or Corktown's Astro Coffee.

SHOP at Shinola and Willy's. I also love **Detroit Hardware**, **Hello Records** and

browsing the **MOCAD Bookstore** (at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit).

LISTEN to live music at **PJ's Lager House**, or try **Fox Theatre**, **The Fillmore**, **Majestic Theatre** and **Cadieux Café**.

SLEEP downtown at the **Cadillac**.

PRODUCT WATER



OUT OF TOWN, WHERE'S GOOD FOR CYCLING?

Hines Drive Parkway to Rouge River Parkway is fun and protected from traffic for about 15 miles.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE TIME OF YEAR IN DETROIT AND WHY?

I love the spring, summer and fall, as they are the best bike riding seasons.

WHICH BIKE IS BEST SUITED TO THE CITY?

Any of our models are great for Detroit. Some people like the wider gear range of the 11-speed Runwell; some people like the simplicity and clean look of the single-speed Arrow and some like the cruiser style of the 3-speed Bixby.

WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE SHINOLA MODEL?

That's like asking who is your favourite family member! All of them, but I own a Runwell.

WHAT IS NEXT FOR SHINOLA'S BICYCLE BRAND?

I've got some projects in development but none are quite fully baked.

Shinola watches all have a **limited lifetime guarantee**. Check out the beautiful **Runwell Collection** and the intricate works of art of the **Brakeman Collection**. Shinola's timeless **bags and accessories** range from **drawstring duffle bags** and **large totes** to **wallets**, **diaries** and **iPad covers**. And watch this space because there's always something else on the **Shinola** horizon. Learn more about Shinola handcrafted goods. For more information go to shinola co.uk





Shopping Beauty Men's Jewellery Hotel on the scene









It's difficult not to be blind-sided by the shiny-bright façades of Orchard Road, where the most heavyweight, high-end international designers have set up shop. But past all these twinkly lights a crop of collectives championing home-grown brands are uniting in their fight against sky-high rents and elbowing their way in. Elsewhere in town, the enclaves of Little India, Chinatown and Arab Street lure shoppers with their curious antiques, carpet bazaars and intricate textiles.

FOR LOCAL TALENT

KEEPERS The only freestanding boutique on the main Orchard Road, this is a beacon for fresh Singaporean creativity. You will find an impressive edit of the city's labels here, including socially conscious clothing from Matter, Carrie K's playful statement jewellery and hand-poured scented candles from A Dose of Something Good. The shop hosts artists in residence and events such as workshops and performances throughout the year. Look out for the new Keepers pop-up at Changi Airport. 230 Orchard Road (www.keepers.com.sg)

MYTHOLOGY Located in a beautiful old Chinese shophouse, this destination store was created by the very welltravelled Apsara Oswal who has brought together under-the-radar labels from all around Asia. Pick up a piece of 'wearable art' made by Singaporean Lionel Low, a designer the store supported by funding his first capsule collection. Hand-perforated suede jackets from Balinese brand Off Duty share rails with contemporary batik dresses by Kuala Lumpur-based Fern and beautiful tie-dyed silk kaftans from Indian brand Lailah Collection. 88 Club Street (www.my-thology.com)







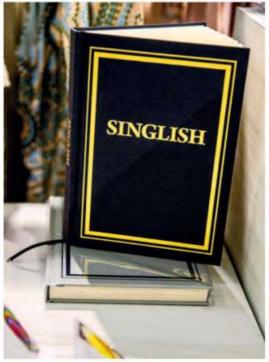




Clockwise from above: a display at Mythology; a dictionary at Keepers; jewellery cabinets, ceramics and candles at Keepers.

Opposite, from top: the living room at the New Majestic

Hotel in Chinatown; jewellery at Pact



ATELIER ONG SHUNMUGAM

Taking the surnames from her Chinese mother and Indian father, Priscilla Shunmugam has created a modern Singaporean label fiercely proud of its heritage. She originally made her mark on the city's fashion scene by reintroducing a contemporary version of the Chinese cheongsam dress, and her pieces weave in stories from history, picking up influences from Japanese kimonos and Indonesian batik with a nod towards the fading Singapore Peranakan culture. 16 Raffles Quay B1-36, Hong Leong Building (www. ongshunmugam.com)

THE CONCEPT STORE

PACT A group of like-minded lifestyle brands have huddled together under one roof to create a space with a clever retail mix. Book yourself in for a haircut at Pact+Lim, browse gorgeous design products at SPUR Hauswerks, choose semi-precious stones from jeweller Killari, and sniff the concoctions of perfumers Code Deco in a glass conservatory beside the kawaii-style manicure stand. The big draw is the outpost of Kilo restaurant, serving seafood cerviche and sake-butter ravioli alongside its signature Mojitos. 181 Orchard Road, 02–14-23 Orchard Central

FOR BOOKS

KINOKUNIYA When it opened in 1983, this shop initially sold books to Singapore's large Japanese community. These days, the shelves are still heaving with colourful manga titles, but they now sit alongside American graphic novels and DC comics. The store is especially focused on the latter genre, hosting comic-related meet-the-author sessions for customers. It's a treasure trove for discovering hard-to-find





publications, with stock ranging from Chinese and local literature to music scores, and fine-art and history books. 391 Orchard Road, Takashimaya Shopping Centre (www.kinokuniya.com.sg)

BOOKS ACTUALLY Yong Siak Street, now a hub for independent cafés and boutiques, is also home to Kenny Leck's enchanting bookshop. He carefully assembles a range of titles from poetry to art, mixed with cookbooks and independent magazines. Supporting the neighbourhood literary scene is the in-house publisher Math Paper Press, which promotes young writers and photographers. Venture to the back of the shop to find handmade stationery and vintage bric-a-brac souvenirs. 9 Yong Siak Street (www.booksactually.com)

FOR INTERIORS

ORIGINALS Australian Geri Murphy brings a fresh twist to Singaporean homeware with her unique finds from India and Indonesia. She sources carved wooden Javanese-style day-beds made from old houses, bright-blue cabinets from Rajasthan, bamboo lanterns, African baskets and dip-dyed linen throws, all as lovely as they are unusual. 896 Dunearn Road, 02-03 Sime Darby Centre (www.originals.com.sg)

JUNKIE'S CORNER This place is an Aladdin's cave of collectibles. Head down an overgrown track near the Turf Club to a huge, tired-looking warehouse stuffed to the gills with well-priced antiques. Allow at least an hour to search through the layers of marble-topped tables, Chinese vases, Seventies jukeboxes and apothecary cabinets. Bring cash and prepare to haggle hard with owner Uncle Charlie. 2 Turf Club Road

BAO YUAN TRADING Hidden behind the stalls of cheap tourist tat on Temple Street is a row of kitchenware shops selling the best selection of Chinese porcelain in town. Come here to stock your cupboards with blue fish rice bowls, brightly coloured vases and traditional tea sets. Old but not strictly antique, the collection includes one-off pieces such as squid-shaped chopstick rests and little snail napkin holders with prices starting at just a few dollars. *15 Temple Street*

FOR STAYING OVER

NEW MAJESTIC HOTEL This quirky boutique hotel is centrally located in a heritage building in buzzing Chinatown. The garden room is the one to book, with its own private verandah and a vintage cast-iron outdoor bathtub. Collaborations with local artists and installations from nearby galleries are displayed in the lobby. 31 Bukit Pasoh Road (www.newmajestichotel.com). Doubles from about £130



LOCAL KNOW-HOW

Renyung Ho
FOUNDER OF FASHION
LABEL MATTER

'Singapore is a young, fast-growing, multicultural city and what's so interesting right now is the tension between old and new. I love Tekka Market. I'll go there to have a roti prata for breakfast and shop for food. You'll find the most amazing curry pastes and powders, and there's an uncle and auntie who only sell freshly grated coconut - they've been doing it for more than 40 years. By contrast, my neighbourhood, Everton Park, has become more gentrified, with independent cafés such as Nylon Coffee Roasters. The Provisions Shop and Strangers' Reunion. The coffee shop embodies Singapore - whether you go for kaya toast and soft-boiled egg, kopi-o (coffee) or teh-o (tea) - no matter who you are and what your station in life, everyone meets and mingles there. It's a place for conversation. Jalan Besar is a great area to walk around. The

General Co sells good espressos and upstairs is a little craft store that also runs workshops. Visit Windowsill Pies for its delicious fig and rhubarb-vodka tarts.' www.matterprints.com





What island do you go to for some time out?

'Jamaica. My dad is from there but I only get to visit every couple of years because it's so difficult to fit in a trip. It's somewhere I can really relax. A sunny day in Jamaica beats anywhere else in the world; the water is just so gorgeous. I adore the culture and the music – I grew up listening to Jamaican radio, my dad made sure of that, and I like to think there are some reggae influences in the songs I write.'



If you were stranded on a desert island, which beauty products could you not bear to be without?

'I'd have to take Garnier Micellar Cleansing Water and Kiehl's Ultra Day Cream for my skin. And Giorgio Armani Luminous Silk Foundation, which really is amazing, Estée Lauder's concealing stick for touch-ups, and Aveda Damage Remedy

shampoo and conditioner. I can't live without those. Coconut oil is also a lifesaver, but maybe I'll be able find that on my desert island.'



ELLA EYRE

The singer-songwriter, chart topper and MOBO winner shares her castaway secrets with Tabitha Joyce

How do you look after your hair in the sun?

'My hair gets a lot of heat in general from curling tongs, irons and rollers, so when I'm on holiday I use

repairing remedies. Kiehl's does a really good mask.'



What's your favourite perfume?

'I've got loads, to be honest. I tend to wear Emporio Armani Diamonds during the day – I just spray my hair with it because it holds the smell so well – and I like Balenciaga Rosabotanica.'

What nail colour do you wear?

'I love Ciaté, the one with the bow on the bottle. There's an amazing yellow shade, but in the summer I go for white because it makes me look more tanned.'

How do you stay fit?

'When I was younger I wanted to be a professional swimmer. I swam for four hours a day but had to stop because I got bad ear infections from training so intensely. Now I go to the gym instead. I'm really into lifting weights.'

Do you cut out any foods before a trip?

'I don't believe in quick diets. It's not good to shock your body because you just

to shock your body because you just end up eating double the amount afterwards, which is much worse for you. I'm lucky as one of my favourite foods is salmon. I eat it almost every day, and sushi.'

What do you indulge in?

'Banana chips are my guilty pleasure: they're not as healthy as you might think. And I'm partial to a Jammie Dodger every now and then.'

I was very young. My mum's from there and all I remember is how big Maltese families are. But it's a place I'd love to return to.'

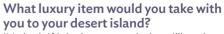
Do you like to sunbathe?

Where is your dream island

'I've only been to Malta once when

destination?

'I do, although, to be honest, the opportunities are quite rare. I apply P20 to make sure I don't burn – it's what my mum used on me when I was a kid.'



'My bed. If I don't get enough sleep I'll conk out anywhere – I'm always nodding off in taxis. I've invested a lot of time and effort into making my bed the comfiest in the world and I haven't found a better one yet.'

From top: Luminous Silk Foundation, £34.50, Giorgio Armani (www.armanibeauty.co.uk). Damage Remedy Conditioner, £24.50, Aveda (www.aveda. co.uk). Perfectionist Youth-Infusing Brightening Serum and Concealer, £28.50, Estée Lauder (www.esteelauder.co.uk). Diamonds Violet, £39.50, Emporio Armani (as before). Nail polish in Big Yellow Taxi, £9, Ciaté (www.ciatelondon.com). SPF30 Sun Protection, £24.49, P20 (www.boots.com)



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FOR NIGHT

If I was forced to walk the plank at gunpoint with just one beauty product in the back pocket of my bikini, it would be the new Crème de la Mer The

Renewal Oil. A brew of deeply nourishing sesame and eucalyptus oils infused with the brand's famed Miracle Broth (the stuff that turns crispy-fried chicken skin into a far peachier prospect). A few drops on skin at sunset gives cheeks a dewy rather than shiny appearance, but don't stop there. Rub it into the lengths of hair before you go to bed to avoid

split ends and slather it onto shins post-shower for a souped-up after-sun treat. £155: www. harrods.com



IF YOU ONLY PACK 4 THINGS...

for a desert island

Olivia Falcon reveals the beauty kit she'd never be without

FOR DAY

I'm usually petrified of tanning oils. Visions of wizened old ladies with skin that matches their crocodile Birkin bags haunt me. But then along came Lancaster **Sun Beauty Dry Oil Fast** Tan Optimizer SPF 50 and everything changed. It's an oil with mega levels of block. Rather than barbecuing your skin, this protects it from harmful UVA (ages), UVB (burns) and infrared rays (damages DNA). It's also non-greasy and has a built-in tan-optimiser complex that encourages skin to produce more melanin so you can lie out all day with SPF 50 on and still go nut-brown. Delightfully crafty, it's the Gordon Gekko of sun care. £24; www.debenhams.com







FOR HAIR

Hair-colourist extraordinaire Josh Wood removes the agony of being marooned thousands of miles from your trusted hairdresser with his Root Concealer spray. It cleverly covers up boggy dark roots and telltale greys with equal aplomb and the non-permanent formula is easy to master: simply point, shoot and brush through. It comes in three shades and has the powdery properties of a dry shampoo, concealing greasy hair and giving roots some oomph.

You can now play castaway without looking like one. £12.50; www.marksandspencer.com

FOR NAILS

It's a fact that the beach is a devil to nails, so thank goodness I discovered Deborah Lippmann's Genie in a Bottle. This strengthening treatment paints on clear and seals your favourite polish rock-solid and chip-free for at least a week. It also contains ultra-sheer violet pigments to camouflage yellow stains and whiten up tips for the cleanest looking nude nail. Handy. £18; www.selfridges.com





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THE MAN

Raimund Berthold uses space-age materials and fantasy silhouettes to make clothes for fashion's out-there adventurers.

THE MISSION

A Cessna-powered journey to farthestflung Madagascar in search of lemurs: 14 days, six fearsome flights, pitch-black caves and more frogs than were really called for.

MILES TRAVELLED LAST YEAR

About 8,000

WEIRDEST PLACE VISITED

'Antarctica. There are no insects, no trees, no airplanes or roads. It's all about the giant chunks of ice, huge mountains, penguins and the cool dark sea. It is both eerie and stunning.'

MUST PACK

'AKG headphones for the flight, a Kindle and a Smythson travel wallet, all in an expandable neoprene/leather bag of my own design.'

t's early morning at the Mandrare River Camp. The sun has just risen and it's still cold. I'm on the ground looking up at four sifaka lemurs with their white bodies, black faces and a permanently petrified look. They're sitting in a tree having a group cuddle. The image sums up the wildlife of Madagascar, which is 80 per cent endemic and 100 per cent cute. This isn't something that can be said of the island as a whole. Its transport system isn't cute. Its rock formations aren't. And its vegetation certainly isn't, not least the forest that surrounds me, with spiny trees and cactus-like plants so fierce they tear at my clothes and skin. It's worth picking my way through it, though, if it will get me closer to lemurs, the absurdly adorable primates that have drawn me to this vast and relatively untravelled island off the coast of Africa. We arrived two days before into the capital, Antananarivo, an atmospheric place of streets snarled with dilapidated 2CVs, humming markets and urban rice paddies. It was here that we chartered a rusting, single-engine Cessna that hadn't been upgraded since 1964. I still don't know how we survived the flight down to Mandrare on the island's far south. The forests here are burial sites, full of the sacred baobab trees, which you can't point at or pee near. If you do, zebu cows have to be sacrificed. The place is surreal: a perfect introduction to the Madagascan countryside. After a few days we fly up to Nosy Be, a small island a few miles off the coast. The beaches are beautiful but we're in search of lemurs so we take a speedboat to the mainland and drive to the Ankarana National Park. The park is humid, noisy with birds: ibis, drongos, lovebirds. We stay at an eco lodge on a lake surrounded by wildlife, most of which is in my room: frogs, insects, things that crawl and slither. From every corner there is a pair of eyes staring back at me. I tuck in the mosquito net so tight it pings. Beyond my lodge the landscape is alien, dominated by deep channels and super-sharp rock formations called tsingy. Our guide shows us the sole of his shoe, which has sliced in half on one of the razor-like ridges. All around us are sheer drops, terrifying blades of stone. But by risking it, we get to see mouse lemurs, tiny creatures with long tails and saucer eyes. Finally we move on to Anjajavy, a smart hotel on the coast. Here the tsingy formations are black and red, and aggressive. Mercifully, this proves to be in stark contrast to the lemurs who jump terrifying distances, as if performing for us, their babies clutching on like gorgeous little teddy bears. On this island of contrasting flora and fauna, I know whose side I'm on.'





DAVID'S POSTCARD FROM...

Iceland

When the weather shifts in Iceland it shifts fast. Our helicopter pilot says his hurried goodbyes and gets out of Dodge while he still can, leaving us on Eyjafjallajökull, the unpronounceable volcano that caused all that bother back in 2010. It's dormant now, but the topography all around remains dramatic: vertiginous valleys of green moss on black rock and thick sheets of glacial ice. The pilot was right to leave, it turns out. Ten minutes later, we're enveloped in clouds that would have stranded him.

Not that he wouldn't have coped, of course. This is an island that engenders in its people heroic self-reliance, dry humour and a love of knitwear. For those of us predisposed to man crushes on wind-weathered figures who sleep in ice holes and believe in elves, Iceland is a place of near-constant swooning. One such man shows us the vast Mýrdalsjökull ice cap in the south. Under it is Katla, a volcano that makes Eyjafjallajökull look like an indoor sparkler. It blows every 60 years and it's overdue.

We're sleeping, it transpires, in a valley that could be flooded very quickly, should it erupt. By all accounts there's a warning system that will issue a text message to all phones that basically translates to: get the kids and run. We scramble over rocks, leaning into the landscape as we cross ridges, conscious of this distant but delicious danger and the sheer drop beside us, thrilled at a rare chance of life in the wild. *Icelandic Mountain Guides offer guided hikes from £50 (www.mountainguides.is)*







Perle Noire earrings in Tahitian pearls, gold and tsavorites, £14,125, **Ana de Costa** (www. anadecosta.com)

Two-finger ring in freshwater pearls, white gold and sapphire, £2,500, Melanie Georgacopoulos (www.melanie georgacopoulos.com)

PEARL JAM

The South Seas beauty is loosening up her look with no-strings-attached fun, says **Jessica Diamond**

There are few precious stones that have had such stick over the past few decades. Pearls are the slightly forlorn, fusty and dusty remnants of an unloved jewellery box, with associations of twin sets and grannies, and the promise of bringing a magical lustre to an ageing neck. But all is not lost: a new generation of jewellers, and even some established dab-handers, are reimagining these perfect spheres into contemporary shapes. Independent jeweller Ana de Costa travelled to the lagoons and atolls of Bora Bora in French Polynesia to source her cultured black Tahitian pearls, their iridescentgrey-ish hue the perfect foil for a pop of electric-green tsavorite. Swedish designer Sabina Kasper is similarly enticed by a darker shade of pearl: her Punk collection features onyx cat ears, turning the safe and sombre into a suitably kittenish jewel. Melanie Georgacopoulos is also irreverent, setting white, freshwater specimens in a painterly rainbow of graduating sapphires on a modern two-finger ring, the colours inspired by the setting sun on a summer evening. Meanwhile, Cartier and Mikimoto are updating their pieces: the former in the rosy hues of a ring with morganite, spinels and cultured freshwater pearls, the shank echoing the architectural ironwork of Paris's Grand Palais. Mikimoto, the Japanese master of the cultured pearl (it selects only the top five per cent from its harvest), sets a satiny bead in a lightening bolt of pavé, and an elegant pair of earrings are finished with minimalist blurry orbs of glowing gold. But what of the natural pearl, now so rare that as few as one in a million shells yields a jewellery-grade treasure? Mayfair's Glenn Spiro uses exceptional gems in size and colour and showcases his take on a traditional ring. It has more than 17 carats of natural clam pearl, the rarest of the rare casually set against a humble yet graphic band of purple ceramic. Granny definitely wouldn't approve.

Morning Star ring in White South Sea cultured pearl, white gold and diamonds, £12,700, **Mikimoto** (www.mikimoto.co.uk)



Pearls in Motion earrings in Golden South Sea and Akoya cultured pearls, white gold and diamonds, £4,200, **Mikimoto** (as before)



Kitten ring in Tahitian pearl, rose gold and onyx, £1,490, **Sabina Kasper** (www.sabinakasper.com)



£17,300, Cartier (www.cartier.co.uk)

Ring in natural clam pearl, rose gold and ceramic band, POA, **G by Glenn Spiro** (www.glenn spiro.com)

Double Z ring in freshwater pearls and gold, £2,250, **Melanie Georgacopoulos** (as before) PHOTOGRAPH: FLORENCE DELVA





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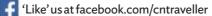
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ISLAND TREND



FLOATING FIEFDOMS

You will recall that most joyous moment of early 2013, when the croissant was successfully crossbred with the doughnut and their offspring caused stampedes outside bakeries. Now a rather more high-end fusion is set to sail into view: the portable private island, which combines the convenience of a mega-yacht with the charms of an actual piece of water-encircled real estate. Sadly, unlike the cronut, this oceangoing hybrid doesn't lend itself to a nifty portmanteau name. But perhaps the mere idea of owning an island you can manoeuvre across the watery face of the earth will be enough for it to catch on, among a certain set at least. According to its two manufacturers, Amillarah and Migaloo (pictured, an impression of the latter's Kokomo Ailand), almost anything is possible, with palm trees and vertical gardens, waterfalls, an underwater dining saloon and a shark-feeding station among the options, along with no-brainers such as a helideck and massive storage for tender and toys. Historically, floating islands capable of supporting human life have tended not to be so opulent. In parts of Asia and Latin America, makeshift platforms on lakes and rivers were places of last resort for the most desperately poor. Yet it may be that these new, man-made islands provide a glimpse of our future in an age of explosive population growth, economic disparity and rising sea levels. Koen Olthuis, a Dutch floating-technology guru and the architect behind Amillarah, wishes us to look beyond the familiar model of the city and to contemplate instead a world of moveable, waterborne hydrocities, 'as flexible as a shuffle puzzle'. STEVE KING

PRESSURE DROP

SPICE TRADERS CAME HERE FIRST, THEN MARAUDING BUCCANEERS.

NOW MOZAMBIQUE'S BAZARUTO ARCHIPELAGO - WISPS OF AFRICA AS

IT ONCE WAS - IS BEING REDISCOVERED ALL OVER AGAIN

BY PETER BROWNE. PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIRJAM BLEEKER









HIS IS THE COASTLINE that spoilt me forever. It is over half a century since I first came to know the beaches of Mozambique, the lullaby cadence of crashing waves and the suck of the swell, the sting of salt and sand on hot skin as my mother wrapped me in a towel to calm me. Each summer for the first 10 years of my life we would pack the old Vauxhall Victor with a few clothes and bumper bottles of Hawaiian Tropic and cross the Vumba mountains from Rhodesia into Mozambique then drive 300km down to the port of Beira.

Our beach holidays there came to an end for the same reason everyone's did: a civil war that would last 15 years, leaving the country limp with fatigue, pockmarked with landmine craters and almost entirely emptied of wildlife. They say even the birds in Mozambique stopped singing for fear of being shot for the pot.

Since the end of the war in the early 1990s, I have returned to this coast many times, to sail around the dreamlike islands of the Quirimba Archipelago in the far north, pub-crawl the dive bars and nightclubs in the capital of Maputo in the south, and swim with manta rays in the Mozambique Channel in between.

I have scoured the world for a stretch of sand and sea to match this extravagant expanse of wild, dune-backed shoreline but have seldom come close. The tidy coral beaches of the Maldives are too confined for me; the Seychelles' forest-backed coves too honeymoon brochure; the Atlantic waves of Uruguay and Brazil beautiful but cold; the lagoons of the South Pacific shallow and tepid. No, for me the coast of Mozambique is perfection, especially at its most terrifyingly loud, wild and windy when humpback whales breach offshore and whale sharks take shelter from storms in the bulbous coral outcrops and caverns of its depths.

The small, sandy islands of Mozambique's Bazaruto archipelago lie just a few kilometres from the sleepy mainland town of Vilankulo, where there are sand-floor bars and simple thatched lodges and campsites. The archipelago itself is in a protected marine park and consists of just five islands: skinny Bazaruto, the largest in the group with a 30km phalanx of dunes running down its spine; Benguerra (about half its size) and then, smaller and smaller, Magaruque, Santa Carolina and tiny Bangue. I first came here 14 years ago when news of the islands' beauty had just started to filter further afield, but I had been hearing about them for many years before that.

In the 1950s, when Mozambique was still a Portuguese colony, a hotel of some stature – 250 rooms with an airstrip and private chapel in its heyday – opened on Santa Carolina island, renamed Paradise Island with some justification by its owner, Joaquim Alves, a colourful local businessman. In the 1960s my grandmother and her boyfriend Tommy would dance on the terrazzo-floor terrace of its dining room as a pianist played the latest Jim Reeves hits on the baby grand. It was the sort of place the young and robust went to sunbathe in olive oil, drink Mateus rosé and feast on fat prawns dripping with garlic and piri-piri sauce.

Above, the beach at AndBeyond Benguerra Island, a bedroom and, opposite, the main lodge. Previous pages, fishing dhows waiting for the tide to turn

The hotel was abandoned in 1973 when Joaquim Alves fled the country just before independence, fearing the worst. The increasingly derelict husk later served as a military base during the civil war, then was left to the mercy of storms and cyclones. Seven years ago, it was announced that Adel Aujan, a Saudi who at the time owned five hotels in the country, would raze the old ruins to the ground and build a \$50-million property on the island. His partner in the venture was John Bredenkamp, a Zimbabwean billionaire accused of arms-dealing during the Iran-Iraq war. The project never happened, although Bredenkamp has since built a private lair on nearby Magaruque Island.

Many breathed a sigh of relief when the deal to redevelop Paradise Island fell through, for such is the power of nostalgia that couples who honeymooned here in the old days still revisit the ruins for a booster-shot of memories, and many will tell you, with great conviction but no proof whatsoever, that Bob Dylan composed his song 'Mozambique' on the very piano from which my grandmother was serenaded.

The four lodges on Bazaruto and Benguerra islands are the only places to stay in the archipelago. The two oldest opened back in 1990 as basic fishing camps, but have grown in sophistication over the years, dictated by the demands of fishermen's wives and girlfriends who objected to roughing it in such a paradisiacal setting. My old favourite, Benguerra Lodge, was recently bought by a consortium including South African businessman Dick

IN THE 1960S THE YOUNG AND ROBUST CAME TO SUNBATHE IN OLIVE OIL, DRINK ROSE AND EAT FAT PIRI-PIRI PRAWNS

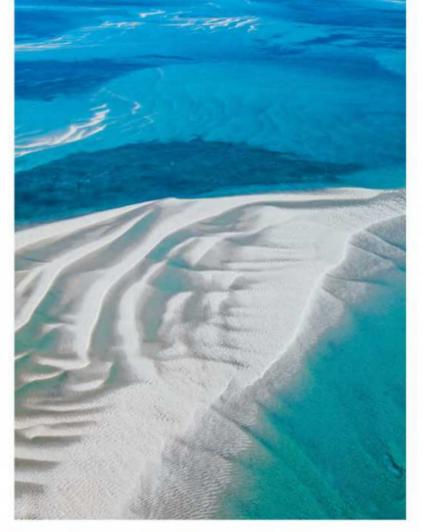
Enthoven (who also owns the Spier wine estate in Stellenbosch) and given a makeover. Now managed by the respected safari conservation outfit AndBeyond, the rejuvenated property is laid out like a traditional bush camp with guest cottages on either side of a central dining and living room. Each has a private plunge pool and outdoor shower; the new interiors are smart-colonial and the setting is cool and shady, a refreshing glade set back from the refractive, bouncing light of the sand and sea.

In its previous incarnation the lodge was managed for a quarter of a century by Sally Bryson, an instinctive and generous host who taught the staff how to cook superb meals and inducted them into the often-perplexing ways of fussy Westerners. Bryson has since retired, but most of the original members of staff are still here, which lends the place a relaxed, practiced rhythm.

The cheerful beach bar in front of the lodge is built from a traditional dhow of the sort still used by local fishermen. The elegant sailing vessels are everywhere, a constant reminder that Mozambique was once the southernmost Indian Ocean outpost for Swahili and Arab traders long before Vasco da Gama washed ashore in 1498 and kick-started 500 years of Portuguese rule.

The other place to stay on Benguerra is beautiful Azura, owned by a British banking couple, Chris and Stella Bettany, and built on the site of Gabriel's backpacker hostel, which I

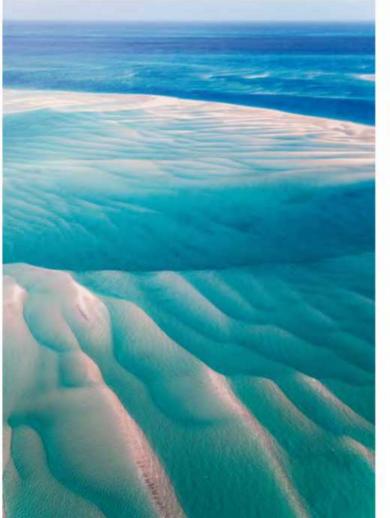
Aerial views of sand banks in the Bazaruto Archipelago and, from right, the main lodge at AndBeyond Benguerra Island, and one of the thatched cottages; the bar at Azura Benguerra Island hotel



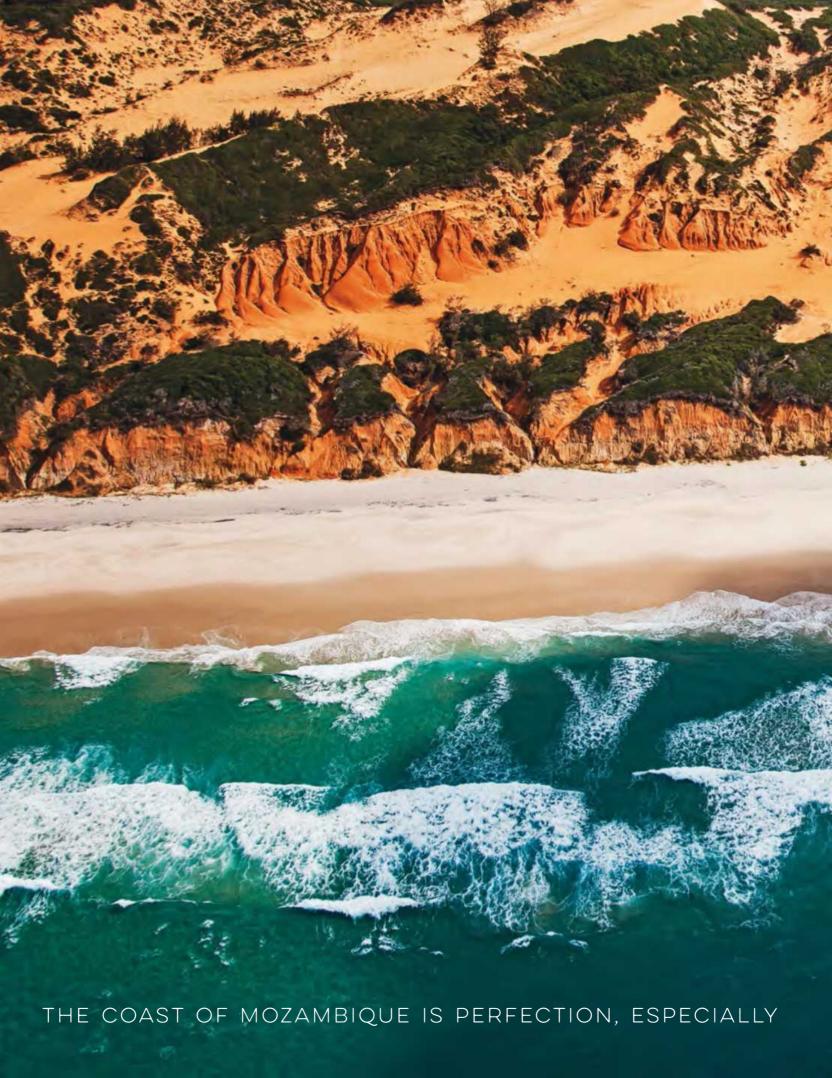
















remember with fuzzy-edged fondness as a place of undiluted revelry. Its replacement is a far more restrained and sophisticated honeypot, a laidback beach hotel with a sunny disposition, a great wine list and excellent chalkboard menu. Like AndBeyond – just a short dhow ride down the beach at high tide – Azura slots into island life beautifully: even before opening the lodge, the Bettanys had built a school and set up a charity for villagers, who also built the lodge from scratch.

These are not isolated pockets of indulgence of the Maldivian
variety. More than 1,500 people live on the islands and
you will undoubtedly wake to the sound of fishermen
as they set off at dawn; take a walk on the beach
in the milky early-morning light and children
will call after you, splashing happily in the
shallows as their mothers collect sand oysters
in baskets woven from lala palms.

The Indian Ocean here is fabulously warm and rich in marine life, with plentiful manta rays and whale sharks, schools of dolphins and loggerhead, green and hawksbill turtles. It is also home to about 200 dugongs, Africa's last sustainable population of the big grey mammals thought to have given rise to the myth of the mermaid. Thanks to the Endangered Wildlife Trust, they have a guardian angel in Karen Allen, a determined young South African based on Benguerra who has made it her life's mission to save them.

Benguerra has also proved itself a safe haven for eight horses rescued from Zimbabwe by Pat and Mandy Retzlaff, who were forced off their farm during Mugabe's land invasions. After it was destroyed, the couple returned after dark to save their horses and those of their neighbours. As time went on and more and more farmers left Zimbabwe, the couple amassed a herd of over 100 abandoned thoroughbreds, part-Arabian stallions, polo ponies, foals and elderly mares. Finally, they managed to spirit the horses across the border into

Mozambique, where they have set up a horse-safari outfit based in Vilankulo and on Benguerra Island.

On a late afternoon ride across the island with Mandy Retzlaff, through villages and up sand dunes with views across its pretty inland lakes to the ocean, she showed me where my mount – a patient and gentle grey mare named Princess – still bears the scar of a bullet wound on her withers. One of the others, a spirited bay called Tequila, was taken to Benguerra to foil his repeated attempts to head back to Zimbabwe. Tequila's escapist tendencies still manage to get him into trouble on the island, where he is known for his night-time escapades, often accompanied by his willing accomplice Slash.

THE NORTHERN TIP OF BENGUERRA reaches out but doesn't quite touch its much larger neighbour, Bazaruto. The bigger island is perhaps even more beautiful, if only because there is so much more of it. There are a great many freshwater lakes, five with crocodiles, all stocked with fat bream and tilapia. Flamingos are

regular visitors, as are flocks of white-breasted cormorants, grey herons, pelicans, and elegant great ibis. There are meadows of sea grass, mangrove swamps and swaying savannah grassland; evergreen forests shelter shy red duiker antelope. In places the island calls to mind Africa miniaturised, especially in the villages where women grow sweet potatoes, sorghum and cassava and children run out from mud huts to wave at passing strangers, still enough of a novelty to induce great squeals of excitement.

This year the island's Indigo Bay hotel was rebranded following a management deal between its owner.

Adel Aujan, and the Bangkok-based Anantara group. Even when it first opened in 2001, it

marked a radical departure from the islands' quieter, more intimate lodges and the newly christened Anantara Bazaruto Island is still the biggest and brashest around. On the surface, the rebranding appears to have made very little difference to the hotel, which is exactly as I remember, if now a little frayed around the edges. There are profligate buffet dinners, golf buggies to get around, a great spa and two resort-style pools, one with a cascading waterfall for families, and the other with a swim-up bar for grown-ups. South African families absolutely love it, and the islanders who work here are perhaps the smiliest and most welcoming anywhere on the archipelago.

The Bazaruto Archipelago was once part of a peninsula connected to the mainland, and at low tide the retreating sea exposes millions of sand spits and tiny isles of baking-soda-white sand set in radiating swirls of vivid blue. In the Portuguese era, so the story goes, convicts would be shackled together and left here to drown with the rising tide; these days guests from the lodges are dropped off for desert-island picnics. One of the most beautiful

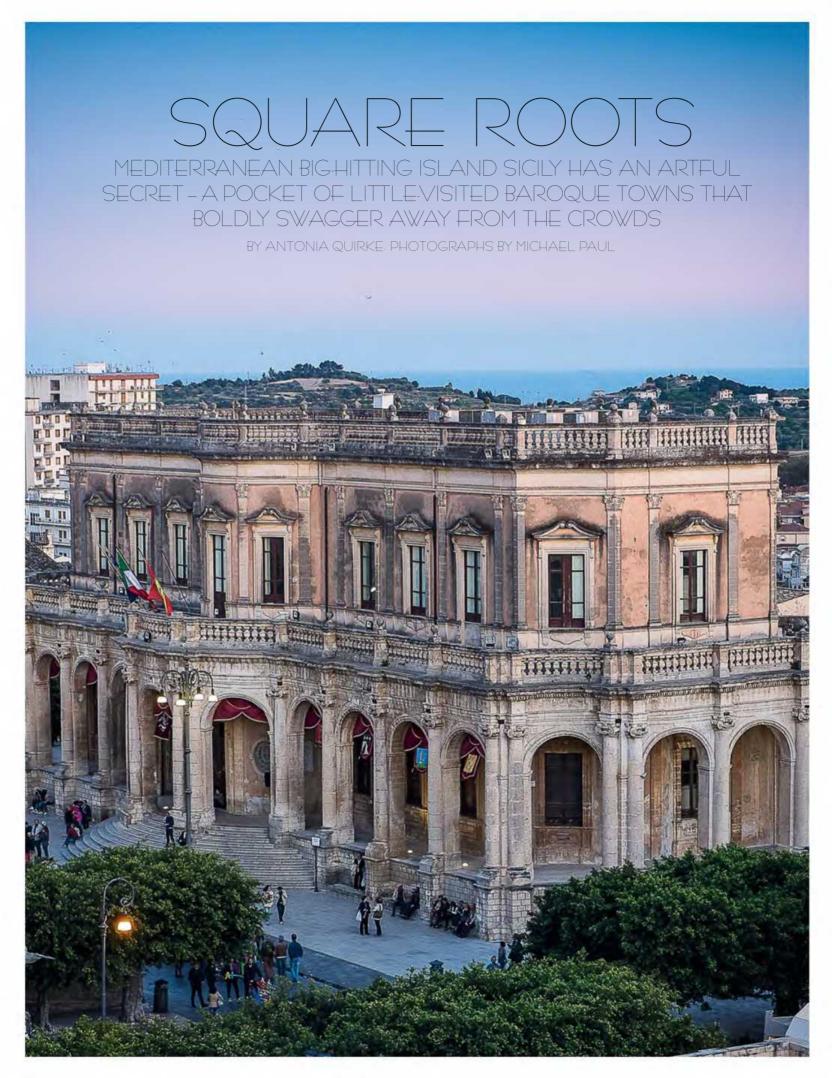
of these ephemeral isles is Pansy Island – named after the sea-urchin skeletons with distinctive pansy-shaped imprints found there – which hugs the southern shores of Bazaruto. From here, against screen-saver blue skies, there are views of the imposing procession of dunes that have for epochs

protected Bazaruto from extinction, and always the growl and thunder of the Indian Ocean as it pounds onto Sailfish Bay, 30km of deserted white beach, an immaculate and almost-to-scale model of the 2,500km Mozambique coastline of my dreams.



AndBeyond (www.andbeyond.com) offers an eight-day Mozambique Experience from £5,417 per person, all-inclusive, with return flights, transfers, and two nights each at AndBeyond Benguerra Island, Azura Benguerra Island and Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort & Spa. It also includes a scenic helicopter flight, one activity (sea kayaking, sunset dhow cruise, snorkelling) and one experience (castaway picnic, island expedition, village tour) at AndBeyond Benguerra Island, a 15-minute massage, a Landrover island drive and a sunset dhow cruise at Azura Benguerra Island, and non-motorised activities at Anantara Bazaruto Island.







A BAREFOOTED ART STUDENT CARRYING WATERCOLOURS IN A WEATHERED I EATHER BAG SMOKES ON A BENCH IN THE PIAZZA

ICTURE FOUR TOWNS yellow as cider held up to the light. Towns cut off from the rest of Sicily by geography - rough mountains and deep ravines - and yet close enough to visit all in one day, and within reach of the sea so you never feel trapped and grilled. Towns once an architectural chaos of Middle Eastern and Punic, suddenly shaken into a formal beauty by a devastating earthquake in 1693. New stones were cut then, and streets redesigned by a Spanish duke, avenues lengthened and straightened, staircases and grand churches all conceived with baroque grace. Wit and order, space and air.

NOTO

Drive 90km south from Catania, along quiet roads bordered by hazelnut groves, and you might find yourself stuck behind a tractor piled with white onions all the way into Noto, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (all these towns are) partly renovated after decades of neglect. The streets off the ravishing main drag are edged with genteel bars and shops selling coy lace dresses, leading to smaller lanes lined with bird-filled gardens and the occasional gently decaying palazzo where you pay just pennies to walk around. No guards stalk the rooms. One morning, in the perfectly baroque Palazzo Nicolaci, I find a walnut billiard table nudging a broken harpsichord in a ballroom. On startling high borders are painted still-bright birds of paradise, hunting rifles and parakeets. A sultan's turban tumbles into a scattered bunch of poppies. I'm in a jewel case. Even at 10am the heat is drugging. Opening one of the long, curtained windows in a side room laid out like a parlour, I get the feeling it hasn't been sat in for years. Didn't Don Fabrizio in The Leopard once say that a house of which one knew every room wasn't worth living in?

The little, golden-stoned town is spread out below, the sea beyond, a blue vapour. On the steps of the grand Municipio - the town hall - young men lounge in the morning silence scratching the ears of their brindled boxers, those most loval dogs that are raced for bets alongside pimped-up scooters late at night through the backstreets of Palermo. In the 1893 Caffè Sicilia next door, white-aproned waiters bring cappuccino ghiacciato - delicious iced coffee poured on almondmilk granita – for a couple of priests sitting mesmerised by the huge flight of steps leading to the cathedral opposite. Rebuilt after part of the building collapsed in 1996, the inside of the cupola in San Nicolò was painted by the Russian artist Oleg Supereco with a gigantic, meditative fresco of the Pentecost. My devout friend Daniela used to go to watch him in the very early morning lying on high boards across scaffolding, delicately painting directly onto the mortar of the 300-square-metre dome - the largest modern fresco in Italy – until one day he hoisted her up rapturously on ropes to join him and touch the swirling robes of his apostle John.

On Thursdays in the summer, after the delirious six o'clock pealing of town church bells, Noto becomes fantastically alive, crowded with girls back from a day at the beach, singing along to a band doing covers of old songs dedicated to romantic frustration. Nicola Di Bari's *La Prima Cosa Bella*. Then several in the antique style of *Ammore Busciardo* (Love the Traitor). Crescendo upon crescendo.

A table of twenty-something beauties in shorts and diamanté-studded boots scandalise the black-robed grandmothers shuffling along the cobbles, ordering yet more wine and bread, eating and smoking hard with lovely brown, rapacious hands. The global craze for hair swept into large librarians' buns makes their young faces

very classic; dark eyes marvellous and serious, perilously gorgeous to behold. Even the northern Europeans around here tonight seem from another time, as though they arrived on some boat in the early 1950s. A blonde in a nip-waisted white frock, clinking silver bracelet and high ponytail looks like Sylvia Plath. A sun-drowsy, barefooted English art student carrying small pots of watercolours and thumbed paperbacks in a weathered leather bag smokes on a bench in the Piazza XVI Maggio, opposite a fountain in which Hercules battles a monster.

SCICLI

Just an hour's drive from Noto, the far smaller town of Scicli sits on the same latitude as Tunis and radiates a mix of bella-figura theatricality and extreme sweetness. Its central pedestrian street, via F Mormino Penna, is paved with pale, ceramic-glimmering stones that seem to continually roll with crimson snapdragons fallen from high window boxes. Many of the balconies in these towns are buttressed with such droll imagination: gasping mermaids, monks clutching wriggling monkeys. My favourite here is a nobleman with a tremendous moustache gobbling grapes until, come the last carving, he is empty-handed and doleful.

Sicilians have a great sense of irony and pessimism, a belief in sod's law. Ask a Sicilian how they are and they will never say 'good', but the more cautious 'could be better'. Never tempt fate, never be pompous. And although they have a great sense of fun and a wicked love of nicknames (I've met a 'pistola' and 'the philosopher' in less than two minutes), they are far less fulsome than their reputation would have it. Far less than the Neapolitans. My friend Emma from Naples, now long-married to a glowering Sicilian baron, used to write overblown





THE TOWN RISES LIKE A GIANT SANDCASTLE, A THING OF PART-DII APIDATED MAGNIFICENCE CONCEIVED IN DELIRIUM

love stories for women's magazines in the 1970s and says she frequently made herself wail with her tales of grieving lovers and unfaithful husbands, weeping at her desk in a way that would make her husband look at his shoes.

Around the famed and lightly crumbling Palazzo Beneventano in the centre of town (Anthony Blunt's favourite baroque building) a sculptor opens the doors to his cool-walled workshop after breakfast and a boy pads through the dainty Piazza Ficili with a bag of pastries. Little ochre dragonflies sit in the pools of water between morning-scrubbed cobbles. 'This is beginning to feel like a place with money,' says the Viennese artist Katia Bernhard, who comes to the town for the light and the long summers. 'It's still cheap enough to live as an artist, but you have to wait hours for the bus...'

Outside cafés along via Penna at dusk, the talk is of a kalif who just visited the town of Syracuse on a 132ft yacht and bought all 3,000 seats at the ancient Greek amphitheatre so he could watch a production of Aida on his own. The painter Franco Polizzi – one of many artists in the Scicli Group who have gathered here to work since the 1980s – eats a plate of donkey mortadella while a gang of children play hide-and-seek around him. Bumping their heads as they count down each number, they toss dark curls and move in a giggling tide up and down the stones, eventually ducking into a church to hide under a rococo platform decorated with life-size lutes and cellos.

'When Syracuse was born,' stresses Polizzi, lifting his eyes disbelievingly to heaven, 'there was no London!' An antique dealer in Ortigia once told me he finds all the best Italian stamps in London. The connection between the British and Italy is deep and long, although few poets or noblemen doing the Grand Tour ventured

south of Palermo: nothing beyond there to see, surely? For centuries these towns were almost entirely bypassed by foreign visitors and, excepting August, they are still rarely full of tourists - more northern Sicilians than anybody else – bar perhaps a few Germans standing around looking at frescoes of a shepherdess gazing down as though she had just fallen out of heaven. Since Inspector Montalbano was filmed in the area more are coming, but Scicli remains languorous. Time here is long. When one evening my college boyfriend Luca (from Messina) and I go looking in the Piazza Italia for a prawnand-orange salad that his sister had insisted was troppu bona, nobody seems to be serving it. When did she actually eat it? Five, six years ago, shrugs Luca, rolling a cigarette. I stop in my tracks. Surely they will have changed the menu by now! This, Luca finds hilarious.

RACHSA

Nothing can prepare you for the first view of Ragusa. The oldest part of the city, Ibla, was spilt in two by the earthquake and part of it rebuilt in the baroque style, but hints of the old town still sit alluringly cheek-by-jowl with such formal perfection. As you round the bend on the road from Modica, up the town rises like a giant sandcastle, a thing of part-dilapidated magnificence conceived in a moment of delirium. Ragusa is secretive, mysterious. Walking around, you feel weirdly high up. Even the squares are on a rake – at all times there's this sense of being on a hill, of walking on air surrounded by silence. Or perhaps the sound is muffled because your eyes are working overtime. In the streets radiating from the immaculate Piazza Duomo, tiny, hidden orange gardens give on to palazzos nuzzling more palazzos with guest rooms and state rooms and saddle-rooms now turned into a ticket

office in which a guide clock-watches and counts change, sitting on a tatty 19th-century cushion the colour of velvety moss. The highly polished marble floors in the piazza's neoclassical Circolo di Conversazione – a handsome social club where 18th-century Ragusan gentry gathered to talk and drink – throw up a brooding haze in the late afternoon, if you manage to peer through the windows before a janitor shoos you away and locks up at five o'clock. I half-spy a citrus grove lying beyond, exquisitely private.

Later, sitting outside the church of San Giuseppe with my local friend Teresa, we watch the funeral of a 104-year-old Benedictine nun, her coffin appearing covered in white roses. Two dogs sleep outside the door, stretched like figures in relief. It strikes me that at this moment every human in my vision bar the pallbearers and now-emerging organist is eating ice cream in some form: cone, tub, brioche and the miniature, two-bite cono turco, dipped in highly flavoured, sometimes perfumed hard chocolate to prevent drips. Sicilians claim they invented ice cream, and frown at any mention of more ancient Arabian sorbets. The square is quiet, a slight breeze moving over all. Teresa tells me a story of the remains of the convent of St Mary and Jesus nearby, with its overgrown garden where the week before a workman she knows saw a ghost of a Franciscan friar and fell back into a hole, snapping his leg. Her face is solemn, despite the drooly smells of stuffed tomatoes wafting from the restaurant next door.

It is impossible to spend time in Ragusa and not talk of ghosts. Photographs of the recently departed plaster the town and on 2 November, the day of the dead, everybody shivers. We trudge through the square on a long dusk-and-wine tour of Teresa's favourite sights: the iron balcony where Marcello Mastroianni appeared

Opposite, the cathedral in Noto. Previous pages left: Corso Umberto in Modica. Previous pages right, clockwise from top left: statues at the church of San Pietro, Modica; a street sign in Noto; a door in the town; a rug hanging over a balcony in Modica; a fresco in San Pietro; Noto's baroque theatre; a card game in Modica; dogs by a doorway; a cappuccino ghiacciato and brioches at Caffè Sicilia in Noto





HERE THE RED HOUSE OF A LOVELORN PRIEST, THERE THE APARTMENT OF A PIANIST WHO CAN BE HEARD PLAYING RAVEL

in Divorce Italian Style playing an impoverished Sicilian nobleman. The red house where the Inquisition punished a lovelorn and vindictive priest. The apartment where an old American pianist lives, who can be heard playing Ravel on Christmas Day. Everywhere, broken stone walls overhang with wild capers. Drunkish now, we brave the Discesa Mocarda, a little staircase leading high up to the scruffy, deserted lanes where the city's sick once lived in caves carved into the hillside. 'Even children on a dare won't come here,' pants Teresa. But instead of ghosts we find only fragrant lime bushes and thin, affronted cats.

MODICA

Just 20 minutes' drive south from Ragusa, in the Piazza Santa Teresa in Modica, teenage boys perform somersaults off benches, calling up to their girls who are leaning out of apartment windows mockscolding (si babbu!) and gossiping in young voices that ring off 17th-century walls as though this were an exotic aviary. The boys' collars are turned up high and their hair - despite their acrobatics - carefully arranged into immaculate quiffs. It seems every man in Modica has a pristine and theatrical barnet. I like to think of it as a kind of 21st-century equivalent of wigs and powder. Even a builder going hard at it with his drill! Even the fishmonger in the arches before you reach the Palazzo Salemi selling skate and squid under a massive portrait of Padre Pio, the monk from Compania who had stigmata that smelled of a perfume they called The Odour of Sanctity.

Modica was once one of the most important towns in Renaissance Sicily. It might not now have the mystery of Ragusa or the cuteness of Scicli, but instead it has a swagger, a continental European feel. Downtown, the glass shutters on the apartment buildings have the look of 16th arrondissement Paris. Balanced on several rocky spurs, the old walled town (once an Arab city called Mohac) is connected to the more elegant baroque below by breathtaking stairs. Climb 250 steps up to the cathedral of San Giorgio and a perpetual wind lightly rattles the doors. Inside, baroque runs riot; outside, pale lilac bougainvillaea teems in terraced gardens stretching down like a waterfall of Rosolio wine.

What it must have been like to see these churches and palazzos and staircases when they were first built. Not here the brooding lava stone of Palermo or Catania, but towns made of gilt and mint green. Not the misery of the northern churches where you see medieval effigies of Christ wearing real human hair, his wounds shaped like chasmal mouths. Here, just fat cherubs and niads. Nebula bubbling and wavering. Lovers dissolving into gurgles, holy choirs bearing mandolins and a figure of St Joseph with a parched wooden staff bursting with borage and starflowers. Ció che é impossibile agli uomini é possibile a dio. What is impossible with man is possible with God.

And still... there is to these southern towns more than just the patina of devotion. I have seen pilgrims, shoeless on the midnight motorways, walking in their wordless hundreds. And other more modest but unforgettable things. One time, on a coast road south of Modica, past fields and fields of cabbage and pumpkin, I stopped to buy supplies from a farmer who let me rummage through a box of chocolatey earth for the best garlic and potatoes, and who watched my face closely for the sudden surprise and happiness on it as I found, at the bottom, pink in the peaty cool, a bag of Venus shells just pulled from the sea. •

WHERE TO STAY

The towns are within easy reach of each other (and close to the Vendicari nature reserve and beach) so basing yourself at a villa from which to explore makes sense. You will need a car (public transport is hopeless) and a map: signs are not the best, and trying to get directions in this part of Sicily can occupy most of the day. Ask the way to a particular restaurant, for example, and locals will want to know why you chose that one.

VILLA FARLI

Covered with late-blooming jasmine and rounded by olive groves, this property sits deep in fields outside Scicli. Super-private, elegant and romantic, its pretty bedrooms are hung with sepia portraits of much loved, lace-wearing aunts and rugged cousins. A classily cool pool and an endless stone outdoor table act as magnets to anybody staying: someone always seems to be in either place, whatever the hour, reading, planning excursions, snacking on leftovers or the moreish fresh almond milk made by the owners and left daily in the fridge. +44 20 7377 8518; www.thethinkingtraveller.com. From £3,230 per week, sleeps six

PALAZZO TRIGONA SUITE

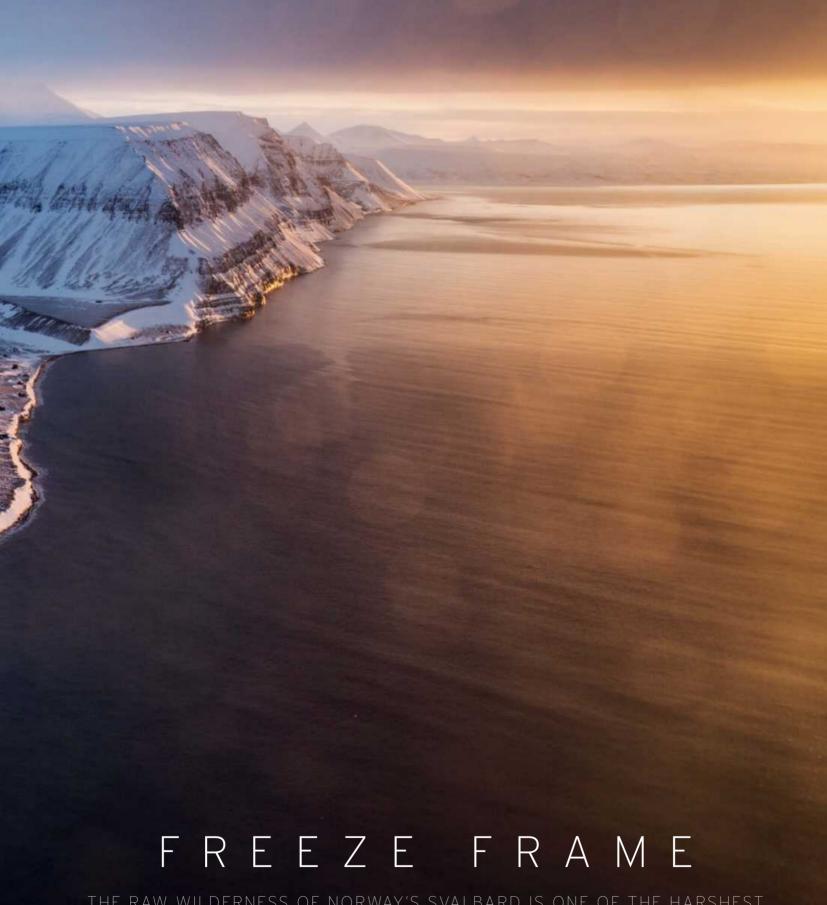
In a gorgeously renovated 17th-century palace in the heart of Noto, this handful of rooms and suites is exactly where you want to be in town, with the pealing of cathedral bells in the morning and early evening just outside your high windows, as the sun hits walls with its syrupy Sicilian gold. The most meticulously restored of all the baroque towns, Noto gets more visitors than the others and yet there is something ineffably demure here, something EM Forsterish, but also a young, egalitarian café culture. +39 0931 835597; www.palazzotrigonasuite. com. Doubles from about £175

GETTING HERE

British Airways (www.ba.com) flies from Gatwick to Catania on Sicily's east coast. EasyJet (www.easyjet.com) flies from Gatwick and Manchester to Catania. Flights are seasonal







THE RAW WILDERNESS OF NORWAY'S SVALBARD IS ONE OF THE HARSHEST ENVIRONMENTS ON THE PLANET. BUT IT'S A LAND WHERE EVERYONE GETS ALONG, BECAUSE GETTING ALONG IS THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE. THIS IS REAL-LIFE 'FORTITUDE', THE SCANDI-NOIR THAT'S SOON TO RESURFACE

BY MICHELLE JANA CHAN. PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID CROOKES





ARCTIC ARCHIPELAGO OF SVALBARD is a man-made construct without natives or roots. You have to leave when you are pregnant because there are no proper hospitals. If by chance you die here, your body is sent back to the mainland because permafrost makes burial impossible. In other words, as Herdis Lien of the thoroughly modern Svalbard Museum says, 'It is not designed to see through a life cycle.'

Sitting at a latitude of 78° N, Svalbard lies 800km north of mainland Norway. Its biggest island is Spitsbergen – the destination for most travellers to this region – reached in three hours by plane from Oslo.

Many come and go. The first documented visit was by Dutch explorers, then English walrus hunters, Danish whalers, Russian fox trappers and American mining entrepreneurs. In the 1920s Norway magicked up a utopian idea for this lawless land: the Svalbard (or Spitsbergen) Treaty, now signed by more than 40 countries whose citizens, when they move here, have absolutely equality with Norwegians, from owning property to opening a mine. The treaty also states that Svalbard 'may never be used for warlike purposes'. There is no need for visas or work permits for anyone from a signatory country, whether they are from Afghanistan or Venezuela. Everyone who comes chooses to be here. There is no poverty nor crime, but also no social security and no nursing homes. It has a population of about 2,500 people and 3,000 polar bears.

In spite of its northerly latitude, the weather is relatively mild because of the warm West Spitsbergen Current, which means temperatures often hover around zero. The cold may not be extreme, but the darkness is. There is no sun for six months of the year, which may explain some of the deadpan expressions I encounter along the way, a slightly detached lack of emotion.

'I love living here,' Jolinne Marlowe, who works at the restaurant of hotel Isfjord Radio, tells me joylessly. She is translucently fair, luminously beautiful, but doesn't offer a flicker of a smile. 'I'm so happy in Svalbard,' she adds glumly.

After half a year of polar nights comes the light – from mid-April to mid-August – and people talk of 'the sun coming back' like a prodigal son. But it is between winter and summer that the light here is at its most tantalising. Hanne Andersen, who works at the liquor store in Longyearbyen, has lived here for nearly 30 years. 'Every February I stand at the window and look at the light,' he says. 'It is blue and mighty.' At these times there is an out-of-focus softness to life. Clouds smudge, like ink blots, before God-moment rays of sunshine blow holes in the sky.

I fly from Oslo to Longyearbyen, Svalbard's main town, where about half the population is Norwegian and the next biggest group of nationals is from Thailand. Go figure. It is said that a Norwegian man married a Thai woman, and her family and friends have since joined her, attracted by the high salaries and low taxes.

This is undoubtedly a transient place – about a fifth of the population is replaced each year – but others choose to make a life here. Many times I hear people say, 'I came for a few months and stayed.' And as I stare out at the Arctic blue and shining ice, I wonder if I might never leave too.

Wearing a snowsuit, helmet and gigantic mittens, I take the keys to a snowmobile. I'd always thought of these machines as noisy, smelly and bad for the environment – a bit like jet skis. But here they are essential: it's the only life-or-death way to get around. We load up supplies: a tent, ration packs, a half-loaded rifle and flare gun, a sat-phone, GPS and extra fuel.

The guide, Steinar Rorgemoen, shows up. He is a bear of a man who wears a XXXL helmet and drives a tiny Toyota. We clamber on our trio of snowmobiles and leave town through a narrow valley before traversing frozen

Opposite, from top: afternoon light settles on Svalbard's mountain peaks; frozen waves and cabins in the morning light. Previous pages, the outer islands of the archipelago





delta systems. Crisp, sculpted mountains rise abruptly from the brooding sea. In this grainy light, the landscape looks like a lithograph.

I slow down to study a solitary short-legged reindeer. He raises his head, before bowing again to nose at the ice for a strand of vegetation. It's a tough life, no matter how shaggy and stocky you are. Reindeer here reject living in a herd because there's too much competition for the limited resources.

We stop at Svalbard's second biggest settlement, Barentsburg, where signs are in Cyrillic. The town is built around a Russian-owned coal mine and we are suddenly catapulted back to Siberia circa 1970. Here there are lurid Communist-era flats, onion-domed buildings, rusting heavy machinery, murals of chisel-faced workers, forests of fir trees and billowing wheat fields. In the restaurant – catering for some of the mine's employees, hungry scientists and the odd tourist – I order a bowl of borscht from a stony-faced Ukrainian. 'Spasibo,' I say. She glares back at me like a henchwoman in a Bond film.

We move on to Isfjord Radio, a former radio and weather station facing Greenland Sea, which is now a clapboard hotel surrounded by disused satellite dishes, antennae and a lighthouse. Food is brought in only twice a year: by boat in summer and snowmobile in winter (when ingredients can get frostbite, and eggs are carried inside sleeping bags). 'We pickle a lot, like my grandmother used to, and dry things in salt,' the hotel chef tells me.

I wish I could say I chewed dried Arctic char with calloused hands, but in fact I feasted like a polar princess: Kobe seal prepared with soya sauce and sesame washed down with Bøgedal beer, followed by reindeer-blood sausage and lingonberries accompanied by a glass of Crozes-Hermitage. This was proper, Copenhagen-style sophistication. Remember this chef's name: Søren Jørgensen. We'll all be screaming it from the rooftops before long.

I ask Steinar if we might pop in on the trapper who supplied the reindeer meat. There are only three full-time trappers in Svalbard, all of them legendary,

CLOUDS SMUDGE, LIKE INK BLOTS, BEFORE GOD-MOMENT RAYS OF SUNSHINE BLOW HOLES IN THE SKY

who live by odd rules, such as if you set five traps you can only take home five arctic foxes, but if you set three traps you can take as many as you like. Steinar rules out a visit. 'We can't "pop in" on trappers,' he says. 'They don't do "popping in". One of them doesn't like to talk. Ever.'

Outside the window, the sea is darker than slate flicked by textured white surf, as if added by a palette knife as an afterthought. It seems there is always a squall threatening.

I walk out into the wind. Two men go by, nod at me, throw off all their clothes and leap into the sea. A walrus with giant tusks swims past behind them and a seal raises its shiny head.

We backtrack north. A storm blows in. The GPS is down to 30 metres. Steinar says visibility is zero. It's hard to fathom what that even means in this colourless landscape. There is no perspective or definition. We plough into deep, soft snow. For the next half-hour we're digging out. As we sweat and scrape and shovel, I glance around for polar bears.

'Not necessary,' Steinar says. 'They're not aggressive.'

I am sceptical. 'Really?'

'Polar bears are only curious - and always hungry.'

But polar bears have a reputation of being the most dangerous mammals in the world. Even Steinar admits they're 'totally unpredictable and very sneaky'.

Everyone here has a polar-bear story. When a seal pops out of its ice hole, one swipe from a waiting predator lands him 40 metres away. They break into cabins, smash down doors and crash through glass windows. One Danish guide was kayaking around Spitsbergen when a bear destroyed his boat; he holed up in a cabin, hewed a backgammon set from reindeer horn and waited 12 days to be rescued. Another guide has seen 300 in her 15-year career, including one harrowingly close encounter: she saved herself by shooting the animal in the shoulder with a rubber bullet when it was a metre away. At

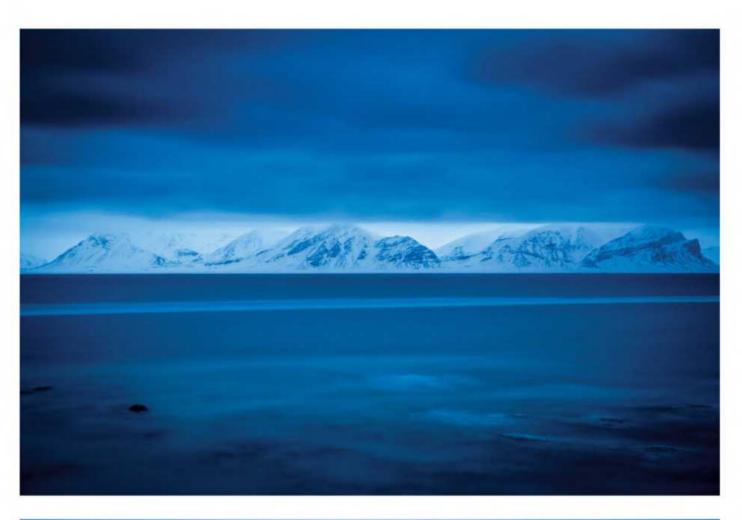
Opposite, from top: migrating seabirds at sunset; a group of huskies heading towards the setting sun. Previous pages, view of a full moon from Isfjord Radio hotel













➤ Tempelfjord we spend a night on a 100-year-old steel-hulled schooner. In summer, the vessel navigates the fjords and during winter, she is deliberately frozen into sea ice. The captain tells me that in her first, untested season they could only hope the hull would take the pressure. As I curl up in my cabin, I imagine the ice bearing down on the other side of the wall. Huskies howl in the distance. The next morning, as I rev my snowmobile, puffins fly overhead.

We stop at Pyramiden, a Russian mining town abandoned in the late 1990s. Apparently the entire population left in the dead of night leaving behind plates on tables, sheets on beds and a film rolling in the cinema. The hotel has recently reopened and it looks like something from *The Shining*. Only five people live in this ghost town. One of them, Sasha, a near-Russian cliché in his felt Valenki boots and high papaha fur hat, tells me his wife left him when they were passing through Istanbul so he thought he'd come here.

We cross the sea ice towards the Nordenskiöld Glacier, with its textured, ruched surfaces and startling Bombay Sapphire-blue hue. In the distance I make out a young woman on skis pulled by a roped husky, a rifle slung across her back. She looks exhilaratingly free, not trying to prove anything to anybody. It turns out to be Ingebjørg Schrøder, the woman who single-handedly looks after the cabin where we are spending the night. A hundred metres after our encounter there are polar-bear tracks in the fresh snow.

That evening I ask her if she is ever afraid.

'It's healthy to be alone,' she says. 'I listen to the wind and notice its direction. I hear the waves under the sea ice. I picture myself on the very top of the globe and life feels perfect.'

Her cabin has a whistling chimney. There is no electricity and water is sourced from glacier ice. They say this is the world's most northern lodge for commercial use. It may also be the final outpost before oblivion. The

EVERYONE HAS A POLAR-BEAR STORY. THE CREATURES BREAK INTO CABINS, SMASH DOWN DOORS, CRASH THROUGH WINDOWS

governor of Svalbard is considering halting all development beyond Longyearbyen's city limits.

On my last day I harness six dogs to a sled that looks like it might have been leased from Santa Claus. Pulling me are Gagarin, Nansen, Putin, Yukon, Tundra, and Ruger with his mismatched blue-and-hazel eyes. Working together, these creatures can reach speeds of up to 18km per hour. I love their haste, almost a panic, to pull, and the fact they are clever enough to poo as they run.

On return, the dogs are tired but there are no treats. Dead seals hang from a teepee-like structure (out of reach of polar bears). My dogs will eat with the others later in the day. There is no soft touch out here.

The Arctic environment hardens you. I meet an Italian who's been here 20 years. He says he stays 'for the distance, for the light, for the horizon' and vows to remain 'as long as I am nervous. If you stop being nervous, it's over. You feel a mistake here very fast.' When I ask another explorer if the rawness and risks make life cheaper or more expendable, he breaks down without explanation, muttering 'sorry'. Svalbard is a tough, mysterious and beautiful place.

I never see the aurora borealis. Neither do I see a polar bear. But it's no matter, really, truly, not through clenched teeth. You come here for the remoteness; for the silence; to feel the air whooshing into your lungs; for the shifting-slanting light; for the instant immersion into wilderness, and above all, to remember your unimportance.

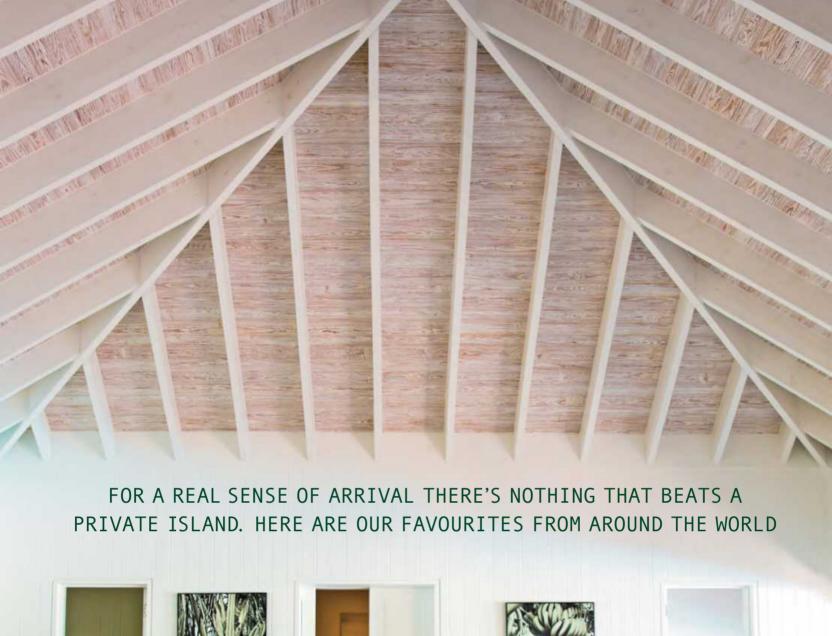
GETTING HERE

Natural World Safaris (+44 1273 691642; www.naturalworldsafaris.com) offers both husky and snowmobile safaris in Spitsbergen on group departures and tailor-made itineraries from £2,300 per person, including international flights. Snowmobile and husky safaris are best experienced between March and May, but safaris to the lodges can also be made by boat through the summer months

Opposite, from top: a slow shutter captures the swirling seas around Svalbard; frozen Barentsburg. Previous pages, looking out from the mountain peaks

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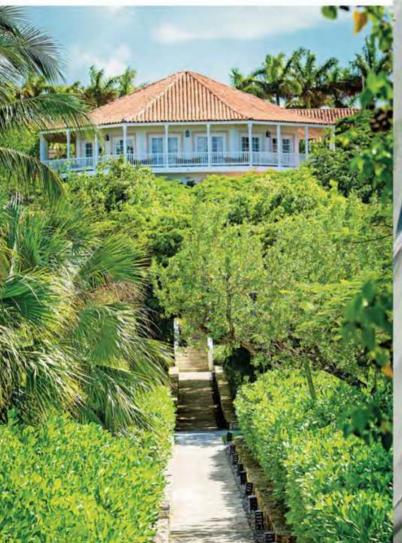














My favourite island is... Parrot Cay

CARA DELEVINGNE

Festival-loving model and actor, about to appear in 'Suicide Squad' and the latest Luc Besson film

'As soon as the boat pulls up to the pier, I jump out, plant my feet in the sand and sprint into the bluest sea. It's the sheer sense of calm, the peace, that sets this apart from other islands in the Caribbean – being able to run along the beach to the beat of Pharrell on my headphones and not see anyone for miles, just run and run with nothing but wildlife and lush island greenness. That's not to say there isn't plenty to do. We windsurf, we play tennis, we walk around the island and kayak down the river. We go out deep-sea fishing and I reel in a huge barracuda. There's plenty of fish on the menu too, of course – whether fresh from the barbecue at Lotus, my favourite restaurant by the pool, or the wicked fish and chips from room service, pure hole-up-in-your-villa comfort food.

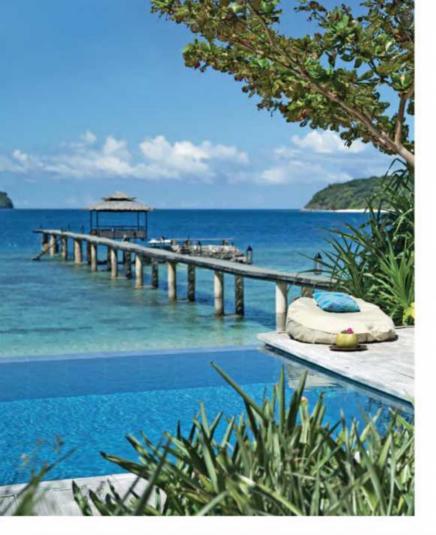
And you couldn't find a more picturesque place to hole up, dressed all in white: it's just 10 steps to the beach, where there are two sunbeds waiting under an umbrella. It's well worth walking up the hill to the incredible spa. I go every day for a different treatment – the reflexology is really good and the COMO Shambhala Bath, which makes my skin the softest it's ever been, begins with a scrub and a soak and ends with a soul-soothing full-body massage. After each one they serve the most amazing ginger tea. But if you only do one thing, lie on the beach all day, from sunrise to sunset, because it's the most beautiful beach in the world. Then stay right there, don't move, and watch the stars come out at night, every one of them blazing out so brightly across the sky, like nothing I've ever seen.' Villas from £1,755 per night. www.comohotels.com/parrotcay











ARIARA, PHILIPPINES

About 160 miles south-west of Manila in the Calamian archipelago, Ariara has a curving, palm-fringed beach, a sea so clear that in the pale turquoise waters you can see right through to the sandy bottom, a slightly mysterious, jungly centre for the adventurous to hike through and, shimmering away in the distance, yet more sand-rimmed and forested islands to explore. Take the island in its entirety: with its large thatched central sitting and dining areas, four beach cottages and two villas (all of which have been designed by Jorge Yulo, a hot Filipino architect), it can house up to 18 people. There are 35 staff who give their pampered guests the time of their lives. Lunch under the palm trees? Dinner beneath the stars? But of course. Want to practise yoga or have a massage? All can be arranged. Feeling active? Manager Florian Müller will take you to the best diving sites to eyeball some of the most colourful marine life on the planet. There are paddleboards and kayaks, speedboats and jet-skis as well as two proper boats for real island-hopping: the Maya Maya (a beautifully equipped three-cabined motor yacht) and the Karen Joy (a traditional 100ft wooden fishing boat with five air-conditioned cabins). Florian and his staff will do the navigating. Everything except fuel, wine and diving is included in the price, which, if you were to fill it for seven days with 18 of your nearest and dearest, would work out at a not-too-horrifying £310 per person per night. From £2,155 per person for seven nights (party of 18) or £3,245 per person for seven nights (party of six); includes all meals and yacht transfers. www.ariaraisland.com

PULAU JOYO, INDONESIA

The southern reaches of the South China Sea are peppered with islands - sprawling archipelagos, clusters of teardrops and uninhabited wildernesses. And there's an astonishing number that you can take over. Pulau Joyo, though, remains by far the most charming. It's smaller than nearby Nikoi, less flashy than Batu Batu, prettier than Pangkil and more authentic than the Maldivian-style over-water villas of Telunas. City-weary expats from Singapore flock to this shipwrecked barefoot idyll. Hong Kong-based shipping magnate Antony Marden initially conceived the place as a holiday home for his family (they own Pangkil too) but its doors have been open to everyone since 2011. The development has been gracefully restrained, with stilted pavilions, some reconstructed Indonesian joglos and others made entirely from driftwood. The six houses are filled with local antiques, ornately carved artefacts, French flea-market finds, rustic hessiancoloured fabrics, big Balinese daybeds and soaring beamed ceilings. There are also two smaller balé houses for overflow guests or teenagers. The chef knocks up deliciously authentic Indonesian fish curries, highly spiced chilli crab and sweet peanut satay, washed down with just-squeezed guava juice - and you never eat in the same spot twice. It's small but there's plenty to do: paddleboard around the shoreline, swim, snorkel (avoiding the odd jellyfish), kayak out to the reef, gather shells and chase hermit crabs on the footprint-free sand, or just hole up on your shaded deck listening to the dried alang-alang grass roofs rustle in the breeze. Anyone with really itchy feet can charter the 140ft Hang Tuah for fishing expeditions or to sail to the nearby islands of Binyoso, Lina and Murbai. Sleeps up to 28. Doubles from £325 per night, full board. www.pulau-joyo.com





L'ILOT, MAURITIUS

How can Parisian Tatiana Schaub ever manage to leave her little utopia in the north-east of Mauritius? The setting is remarkable, just off the mainland with access via a narrow bridge, giving the feeling of being adrift at sea. It's really quite unique among the mega-hotels for which this winter-sun hotspot is so well-known. Then there's the house itself, an utterly private, wood-and-stone barefoot-smart number that sits on a bed of volcanic stone surrounded by natural rock pools and a fringe of palm and pine trees. It has a thrilling sequence of 360-degree Indian Ocean views through every window and door, and from every bedroom. Daily routines revolve around countless dips in the sea, reading, lunch on the veranda and afternoon siestas. Most people stay here for an entire week without crossing the bridge once. Local fishermen bring lobster and fresh fish daily, master baker Teeram regularly swings by on his bike selling the most delicious rotis and croissants, and a housekeeper and cook are on hand to prepare breakfast and lunch. The villa has been in Schaub's family for more than 60 years and in her reimagining of the house for rental, she has successfully mixed childhood memories (old family photographs) and her love of the natural world (stones, wood and shells picked up on her travels) with a sharp style (Philippe Starck chairs and Driade lights) that doesn't detract from the beauty that lies beyond the doorstep. From £390 a night for eight (from £140 for two). www.lilot.biz

ZAYA NURAI ISLAND, ABU DHABI

Dubai may be frantically building them but Abu Dhabi has more than 200 of its own naturally occurring offshore islands already. Some are just extended sandbanks; others are surrounded by belts of dense mangrove. Emirati entrepreneur Nadia Zaal, a real estate whizz, spotted an opportunity and turned her attention to Nurai. She has thrown pots of cash at the project, drafting in the Parisian architects responsible for the Nam Hai in Vietnam, shipping over more than 800 fully grown date palms and calling on her mother, Lesley Zaal, to help with the interior design. The result is a slick, Asian-style lair in the Persian Gulf, reminiscent of the shiniest villas in Phuket. The property on the two-mile-long island opened its doors in February 2015 but is still evolving and developing. By the new year there will be a full-throttle spa and five restaurants serving locally grown organic fruit and vegetables from the Ripe Market, line-caught fish and biodynamic wines. The 32 vast beach villas are highly modern, dominated by clean lines, cotton-wool-white linen and bleached wooden furniture. The outdoor terraces have private infinity pools, deep day beds and views out over the caramel-coloured sand to a sea full of dugongs and dolphins. If the collective speedboat ride from Saadiyat is too public, come by chopper, which is how a certain Hollywood couple with six children are rumoured to arrive (he is now shooting on location in the desert).

Doubles from about £885. www.zayanuraiisland.com**











ISLETA EL ESPINO, NICARAGUA

This is an off-grid beauty. The 10-minute jaunt by private boat from the charming colonial town of Granada across Lake Nicaragua (the largest in Central America) takes you past uninhabited islets squawking with wildlife, lush, thick jungle and local fisherman bringing home their catch. Brother-and-sister team Andrew and Kristin Werner's aim was to create a sustainable but also gorgeous eco-lodge out in the middle of the freshwater expanse. Bohemian with an industrial edge, this is not a typical tropical hotel. Instead it is considered and relevant, and environmentally sound with electricity from solar panels and filtered water straight from the lake. The chef helps himself to vegetables from the organic gardens and plucks mangoes straight from the trees, local farmers and fishermen drop off their hauls and everything from the tortillas to the ginger beer is homemade. The three bedrooms, one of which is in a treehouse, are a study in rustic-luxe with polished concrete floors, hand-painted earthenware tiles and furniture carved from indigenous woods. Woven bamboo lamps are lit by super-efficient LED light bulbs and outdoor bathrooms are tucked under curving sheets of corrugated steel. Mornings start with yoga on the deck to a soundtrack of monkey chatter and evenings are rounded off with a local craft beer or a dragon-fruit cocktail in the pool, looking out to the dormant Mombacho volcano, whose foothills turn terracotta as the sun goes down. Doubles from £75, or £250 per night for the whole island. www.isletaelespino.com



PRIVATE ISLAND RETREAT, GREECE

There are still places in the Mediterranean where you can hide out and relish the sense of remoteness. This summer house on a privately owned islet, one of the Petalioi islands, feels fantastically far-flung but is actually just 45 minutes from Athens by speedboat and a stone's throw from the bigger island of Evia. Its 300 hectares are covered with ancient, gnarled olive trees and heavily scented wild thyme, and small sheltered beaches ring the shore. The scenery is ancient and untouched, and there are no other buildings except for some historical houses and a chapel near the jetty. The centuryold villa has belonged to the same Greek family for three generations. Built in a neo-classical style, it is airy with high ceilings and large windows looking out on to the Aegean or the quiet gardens. It's understated and elegant, with antique tiled floors and original fireplaces in each of the six bedrooms, far removed from the racy holiday madness of nearby Mykonos. Steps away from the shady terraces of the main house there is a calm bay, perfect for swimming or long pied dans l'eau lunches feasting on home-grown ingredients from the owner's organic garden where guests can forage for fresh eggs, sweet sun-ripened fruit, herbs, vegetables and the owner's prized tomatoes. A chef and full round of staff can be arranged. and the closest shops and restaurants are found in the pretty ports of Marmari and Karistos, just across the water. Sleeps 12, from £6,700 per week. www.welcomebeyond.com/property/

greek-island-retreat



THE BRANDO, FRENCH POLYNESIA

Contained inside a living coral reef in the remotest South Pacific, the atoll of Tetiaroa is made up of a dozen white-sanded islets surrounding a five-mile lagoon so pure that its silvery blue can be seen from outer space. Arriving by six-seater private plane from Tahiti, as all guests do, is heart-stopping: the atoll glimmers as you approach. Coral gardens stretch hundreds of feet into abyssal depths and rare orchids surround freshwater pools. Marlon Brando first clapped his covetous eyes on it when scouting for locations for *Mutiny on the Bounty* in 1963, and owned it for the rest of his life. It opened in 2014 as an ultra-polished hideaway, with two quiet restaurants, an immaculate spa and 35 glass and ironwood villas set back from a blinding beach amid thick trees. There are no sea-cluttering overwater bungalows characteristic of most Polynesian hotels here – everything feels entirely folded away, a place to dream and read, to the sound of the Pacific bashing against the distant reef. With just 80 guests (maximum) at any given time, the rest of the atoll is left untouched. Of course, every detail from the thread-count to the on-call butlers is as excellent as you'd expect, but the Brando has such head-lolling natural beauty it's in a league of its own, with a blazing light that, in the early morning, hits the shallow waters as though they were an ocean of milk. *Doubles from £1,410. www.thebrando.com*



INN AT CUCKOLDS LIGHTHOUSE, MAINE

There is nothing ancient or creaking in this old lighthouse. Instead, you'll find modern suites with original art, marble bathrooms, massive beds made up with crisp linen, and afternoon high tea with port and cheese, served in a panelled parlour, all half a mile offshore. After a short ride in a launch from Maine's Southport Island, you cross a gangplank and enter a dreamscape that feels like stepping into an Andrew Wyeth painting. This restored 1892 lighthouse at the mouth of Boothbay Harbour has been open for two seasons (late May to September), and the two-bedroomed bed-and-breakfast has become a coveted little getaway that is now booked up months in advance. Throughout the house, soothing grey tones and thick, heavy curtains echo the circling sea all around. Breakfasts of homemade blueberry muffins and cranberry scones are served around the farmhouse table in the light-filled kitchen - linger with a third cup of coffee on the deck and breathe in the salt air. Days can be spent flying kites, kayaking, exploring the craggy coves or simply settled in an Adirondack chair on the lawn watching the Atlantic roll. The boundless views of lapping waves and drifting schooners are hypnotic.

Doubles from £325, or £910 per night for the whole island (sleeps four). innatcuckoldslighthouse.com



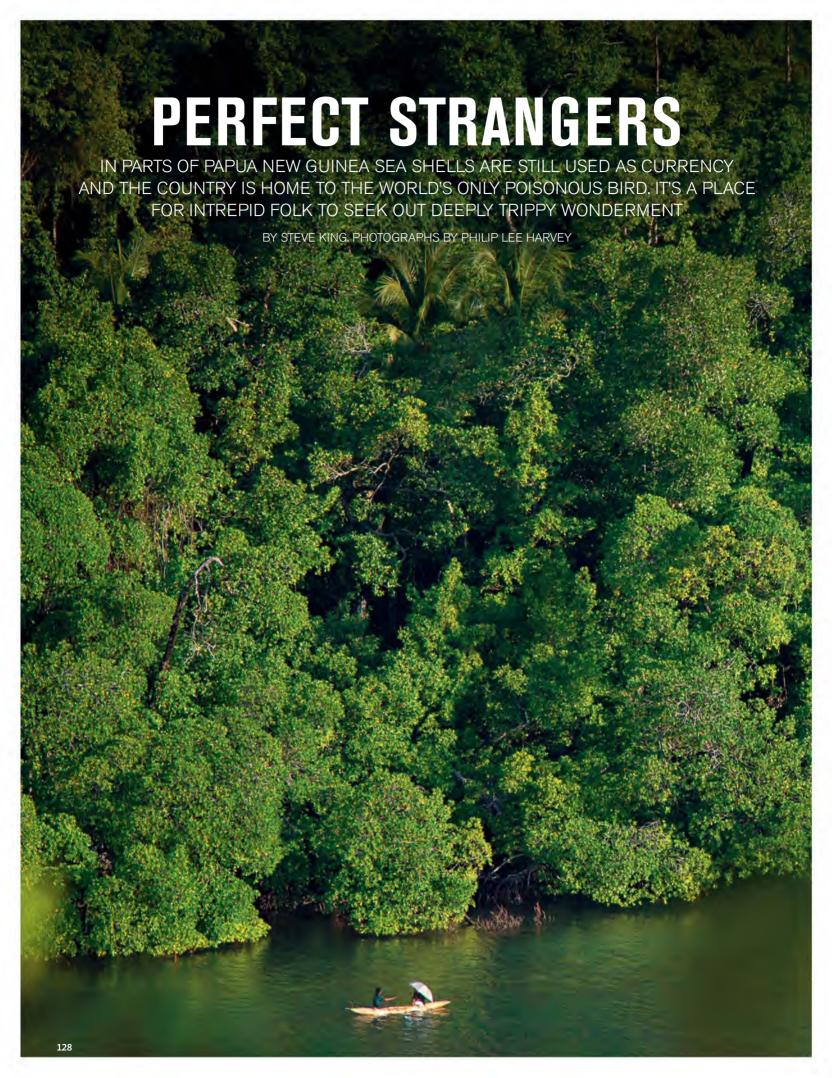




DOLPHIN ISLAND, FIJI

Frangipanis and hibiscus curl around the four classic thatch-roofed huts that New Zealand designer Virginia Fisher has raised to the pinnacle of beach chic, with sweeping curtains, bleached timber and outdoor showers. After a deep sleep, you wake to the call of birds among the coconut palms. Everyone gravitates towards the breezy, open-sided main sitting room or just outside it on the deck overlooking the infinity pool. Block out time in the diary to spend on one of the huge white sofas with a good book from the intriguing library, or just flip over on to your back to admire the ceilings, lined with tapa - traditional printed bark cloth. You can snorkel, coax a little sailing boat out into Bligh Strait or hit the sunbeds for a spot of horizontal dolphin-spotting. The villagers will even drop in for a song, some fire-dancing and a lovo, where dinner is cooked in an underground oven. The island is part of Alex van Heeren's super-exclusive Huka Retreats portfolio (his other lodges are in South Africa and New Zealand), so you can expect intuitive service from housekeeper Dawn Simpson and her team, with a kitchen dishing up excellent Fijian food and a lavish drinks trolley that is never far from hand. For absolute seclusion, five minutes' walk around the five-hectare island is a hopelessly romantic hilltop bure for sleep-outs. Sleeps eight, from £490 per person per night. www.dolphinislandfiji.com

REVIEWS BY Kerryn Fischer, Belinda Jackson, Marianna Jamadi, Debbie Pappyn, Kathleen Pierce, Antonia Quirke, Issy von Simson, Helge Sobik, Lucia Van Der Post









ONDON RIDGE, in the western highlands of Papua New Guinea, overlooks the Wahgi Valley and the town of Mount Hagen from an elevation of about 2,300 metres. Every morning and evening enormous banks of thick cloud roll through the valley like surf, obliterating the view of the town and the mountains that surround it. I watched this happen half a dozen times from the top of the ridge. I almost came to doubt my senses, gazing into these towering waves of cloud as they swirled and broke around me, silently, harmlessly, in hypnotic slow motion.

One morning after the clouds had passed, I walked further up the mountain in the company of a guide and bird expert named Joseph Ando. We followed a narrow path cut neatly out of clay the colour of tikka masala. Joseph chatted about whatever caught his eye – a particular orchid, a bowerbird's abandoned bower, a section of forest that had long ago been logged but had been replanted and was now flourishing once more. Soon the path ran out and the way grew steeper and the forest denser. Eventually the conversation ran out, too, as we concentrated on putting one foot in front of the other.

All of a sudden, Joseph stopped dead in his tracks and hissed: 'Listen!'

I stood still and caught my breath quietly. Following the tilt of Joseph's head, I looked up into the canopy. But listen? To what? All my untrained ears could hear were the same sounds that had surrounded us since we set off – tweets and chirps and squawks, some near, some distant, rising brightly or harshly for a moment before subsiding into the ambient murmur of the living forest. Joseph raised a finger as if to say: 'There!' Ah, yes. Overhead, not far away, a brief sequence of throaty staccato quacks, rather like a duck. Then there was a swish of disturbed leaves, presumably as the invisible creature took wing.

'Astrapia splendidissima,' said Joseph. 'The splendid astrapia. A bird of paradise. What a pity we couldn't see him.'

I travelled in Papua New Guinea for two weeks without once seeing a bird of paradise. Yet my feeling, there in the forest on Rondon Ridge, was one not of disappointment but of satisfaction. I was grateful simply to have shared space with *Astrapia splendidissima*, with a name far grander than any Roman aristocrat.

On the way back down the hill Joseph pointed out that, of the world's 39 different birds of paradise, his country is home to 38. Such super-abundance is typical of Papua New Guinea. In a world that is running short of wild frontiers, it is still a land of undreamed-of mysteries, where hitherto unseen peoples speak unheard of languages and live alongside as yet unnamed plants and animals. Outsiders were wholly ignorant of the existence of the Wahgi Valley itself until 1933, when two Australian brothers, Mick and Dan Leahy, arrived in search of gold. They found not only gold but also a population of more than three quarters of a million: men and women who farmed with stone tools, dressed in leaves and knew nothing of neighbouring valleys, let alone of foreign lands across the seas.

By the end of the 19th century the Netherlands had claimed the western half of the island, while the east was divided into Australian Papua and German New Guinea. (In 1949 the

From top left: a Kualga boy in Mount Hagen; a villager in Tufi. Opposite, clockwise from top left: a Tufi man in traditional headdress; a hut on Lake Murray; a boy paddling in McLaren harbour; villagers in Tufi. Previous pages from left: Cape Nelson fjord; tribal markings in McLaren harbour







➤ two merged to become the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, which was governed by Australia until independence in 1975.) But the early colonial powers stuck to the coast, assuming the interior was one vast tract of mountainous jungle, too hostile to sustain human life. Only the most devout missionaries and masochistic traders ventured inland, usually with little success. After 25 years of one Dutch mission there were more missionaries killed than natives converted.

The arrival of the Leahy brothers and the discovery of gold in the highlands changed all that. 'The world,' as the writer Edward Marriott has put it, 'watched astonished as valley upon valley of Stone Age warriors emerged blinking into the hard light of the 20th century.' This image, with its suggestion of cinema audiences transfixed by grainy Pathé newsreel footage, is apt. Mick Leahy, though by no means the sensitive, artistic type, had armed himself with a Leica as well as a Mauser, neither of which he was shy about turning upon his new acquaintances. His

photographs of 'first contact' with the people of the Wahgi Valley in the 1930s are an extraordinary visual record of a precise moment of cultural upheaval.

Of course, not every discovery a traveller here makes has to be of quite that order of magnitude to be personally significant. Almost everywhere I went I had moments when I was acutely aware of my proximity to a certain kind of exoticism – beautiful but at times unsettling – that is, in my experience, unique to Papua New Guinea.

LAKE MURRAY, THE LARGEST LAKE IN THE LAND, is in the far west. The flight there, from Port Moresby via Mount Hagen, over rippling emerald-green cordilleras, was a beautiful reminder that, in addition to its gas, oil and mineral riches, the country possesses an even more valuable natural resource: the largest unbroken stretch of rainforest outside the Amazon and Congo basin. It also helped me make sense of a widely quoted statistic. At last count

IN A WORLD THAT'S RUNNING SHORT OF WILD FRONTIERS, THIS IS A LAND OF



it was reckoned that almost 850 distinct languages – roughly a seventh of the total number of languages in the world – are spoken in Papua New Guinea. There are several reasons for this, the main one being the combination of the extremely rugged topography in large parts of the country, which makes movement over long distances by any means other than flight practically impossible, and an entrenched culture of revenge, which historically meant that no one went beyond his or her own tribe's borders for fear of ambush. So languages, like tribes, did not mix.

I visited several villages around Lake Murray. At one, Tagum, children swarmed to meet the skiff, shrieking and laughing. The elders said I was among the first dozen or so white people these kids had ever set eyes on – the others had been missionaries, glimpsed from a distance at the government station – and certainly the first to come and see them at home. Though hardly a Leahy moment, this information was nonetheless remarkable. Where else in the world, I wondered, could I be told such a thing?

In the village of Tufi, on the south-eastern coast, the sense of physical isolation was as acute as at Lake Murray, or indeed anywhere else I visited in the country. No roads lead to it or from it. You get there by air or by water. It is barely a village, more like an airstrip with a hotel attached and a number of coastal communities within a few hours' canoe ride, set among sheer-walled volcanic fjords. Reefs are dying and decaying all over the world. Not here. The reefs near Tufi are the stuff of legend among experienced divers, with 50-metre visibility and layer upon layer of magnificent marine life: pods of dolphins cavorting at the surface, hammerhead sharks skulking in the deep and all manner of marvels in between.

Back on dry land, the hotel's two resident cuscuses – treedwelling marsupials the size of plump dachshunds – were extremely charming. Ponderous and clumsy, with baffled,

Cape Nelson fjord. Following page, a boatman in McLaren harbour

MYSTERIES, WHERE HITHERTO UNSEEN PEOPLE SPEAK UNHEARD OF LANGUAGES





red-ringed eyes, they looked like stoners who had been caught shoplifting. Unlike the cuscuses, I was up before dawn to watch the sun rise. On either side of the fjord, steep hills receded inland in a series of overlapping Vs, as impeccably stylised as a stage set in an opera house. On the still surface of the water hints of apricot-coloured daylight made a diamond-shaped pattern that reminded me of elephant hide. The skiff's idling outboard motor ticked. I felt the slosh and sway of the current against the metal hull. Gardens of coral seemed magnified in the shallows. In the afternoon I visited the village market, where men smoked sweetly scented cigarettes made of home-grown tobacco rolled in shreds of old newspaper and many of the women had elaborately tattooed faces in the style for which Tufi is famous; bold, flowing, symmetrical.

The town of Rabaul is north of Tufi, on the island of East New Britain, almost as far east as you can go in Papua New Guinea. It is one of the weirdest and most wonderful places I have ever seen, although certainly not beautiful in any conventional sense. By all accounts Rabaul was once exceptionally pretty, with whitewashed colonial homes set back from wide, leafy avenues. But in 1994 two of the volcanoes that surround it, Mount Tavurvur and its geological twin Mount Vulcan, erupted, burying the entire town under ash to a depth of six metres. Only a few buildings were left standing: the Rabaul Hotel, the Catholic cathedral, the former New Guinea Club and, alongside it, a bunker built by the Japanese

his own admission enjoyed considerable success here in his quest to find the perfect female breast. 'Often,' he recalled in his memoirs, 'I would realise that I was staring at a honey-coloured girl of exceeding femininity, with a perfect figure and the most glorious pair of breasts you ever saw – the classic ski-jump type.' I did not know, however, that he had been a customer at the Rabaul Hotel's Chinese restaurant.

Susie was blonde and girlish but old enough to remember this place in the days before independence, when her Scottish parents ran the hotel. 'It was like having a licence to print money. We had 110 per cent occupancy most of the time. You could get a seven-year mortgage. Halcyon days. Oh my God this was a posh town! You could find whatever you wanted here – Chanel, Dior, Mikimoto pearls, Stuart crystal. You name it. And the parties, the balls, the chiffon gowns! And the tennis parties, with bois – not boys, that is, bois – with drinks served on silver salvers and rattan chairs and...' A trailing off and a pause and a theatrical frown. 'It really was very inconvenient to have independence come to this nation.'

Later, in the lounge bar, beneath a faded portrait of Queen Elizabeth and an enormous crocodile skin, Susie poured double whiskies for anyone who wanted one. 'Maybe we weren't meant to be here forever...' she said quietly, trailing off again. I did not quite believe her. I left with the feeling that somehow both she and the hotel would always be here, come what may.

KITTED OUT IN ENORMOUS BARK MASKS AND LEAFY PANTALOONS, HALF A DOZEN DANCERS CRASHED BAREFOOT THROUGH A RAGING BONFIRE

during World War II, from which Admiral Yamamoto commanded his fleet. Everything else was lost. Today it is one of the more convincingly post-apocalyptic landscapes you are likely to see this side of Armageddon. When I arrived it had been raining for hours. The endless ash was dark and sludgy. There were no cars in the streets, no people, no nothing. 'This was Chinatown...' my driver said as we ploughed through the muck. 'The Bank of PNG used to be on this corner... That's where the cement factory was... The golf course was over there...' I was captivated.

If you are in Rabaul, I had been advised, you must look up Susie McGrade, the proprietor of the Rabaul Hotel. Finding the hotel, of course, was easy, and I could hear Susie before I could see her. Perhaps I took to her because she somehow resolved my earlier encounter with the bird of paradise on Rondon Ridge, which I had heard clearly enough but which remained tantalisingly unseen. Whatever the reason, the energy Tavurvur and Vulcan unleashed on Rabaul in 1994 was nothing compared with the energy Susie unleashed on a complete stranger in casual conversation over a glass of fizzy water and a pot of coffee in the hotel's dining room.

'Rabaul is the town that refuses to die!' she declared. 'Talk about the Pompeii effect. Stairways to heaven all over the place. The Allies dropped more bombs here than the Japanese did on Pearl Harbor. But the story is just so fantastic. The setting, the history. Did you ever hear about Queen Emma? Did you know that Errol Flynn used to eat at that table over there?'

In fact, I had not heard about Queen Emma, though I subsequently looked her up. She was a member of the Samoan royal family who, in the late 19th century, built a mansion near Rabaul that she decorated with furniture from the estate of Robert Louis Stevenson, and gained a reputation as 'the epitome of promiscuity'. Flynn, I knew, had allegedly spent time in the area as a 'blackbirder' – a slave-trader, in effect – and had by

That night I attended a fire dance performed by members of the local Baining tribe in the hills above Rabaul. Vivid, highly charged and deeply mysterious, it encapsulated my impression of the country as a whole. Kitted out in enormous bark masks and leafy pantaloons, half a dozen dancers crashed barefoot through a raging bonfire. A chorus intoned chant-like songs and pounded out a relentless beat with heavy bamboo poles. At one point a python was produced, held aloft by two dancers, writhing in silhouette against the flames. As the fire burnt down, the dancers stomped on the logs and kicked at the coals, scattering fiery debris into the darkness. Sometimes, I was told, the dancers not only walk on the coals but also eat them, along with the snake. Accounts of the significance of the ceremony vary. The Baining are reluctant to discuss it - the dancers prepare and dress in strict seclusion – and anthropologists have interpreted it in different ways. Broadly speaking, the consensus seems to be that it represents forest spirits paying obeisance to a volcano. Whether that is accurate or not, it would be impossible to overstate the primal potency and sheer strangeness of the spectacle to an observer seated at the point where the firelight ran out and the darkness began.

GETTING HERE

Wildlife Worldwide (+44 1962 302086; www.wildlifeworldwide. com) offers 15 nights in Papua New Guinea from £7,795 per person, including flights from London with Singapore Airlines (www.singaporeair.com), internal flights with Air Niugini (www.airniugini.com.pg), charter flights, transfers, selected excursions and wildlife guiding. The country's infrastructure is relatively undeveloped so be prepared for a bit of short-hopping in small planes to cover large distances quickly and safely. For more information on Papua New Guinea visit www.papuanewguinea.travel



AROUND THE WORLD WITH HARVEY KEITEL

The star of Reservoir Dogs, Pulp Fiction and Mean Streets has made his name playing edgy characters but in reality he's a Beyoncé fan who's cameoed in her music video for free

What was the first island you ever visited?

'I was born in Brooklyn and have lived a lot of my life on the island of Manhattan. I also started my career on Parris Island, South Carolina, where I did my marine training. I was 17 and I joined up with two of my best friends. It was worlds apart from Brooklyn. In Brighton Beach my mother cooked for me, and took care of me; on Parris Island, my drill instructors did not cook for me, and tried to kill us, or tried to run us into the ground at least.'

What would your desert-island paradise look like?

'Let me lie down and think about that. It would be you in a grass skirt massaging my feet and hands, someone fanning me, beautiful white sand as fine as the Sahara, palm trees, a lagoon, pristine water, jungle.'

Have you found anywhere that comes close to it?

'When I was in the marines we were stationed in the Caribbean, off the coast of Puerto Rico. Me and some buddies went to Vieques with a few cans of beer and I remember rolling them into the ocean to keep them cool. The water was so crystal clear you couldn't lose them.'

Which parts of your favourite places would your dream island consist of?

'I'd have to include a view of the Alps. I thought I'd seen it all until I saw the Alps. One of the most incredible sights ever. You know it's real, but your mind is not ready for it. Then a view of the hills of Tuscany, and one of my favourite New York restaurants, Il Buco, where I've had a few birthdays. The food and the chandeliers are incredible.'

Are you low-maintenance enough for life on a desert island?

'On a desert island or Manhattan island, I'm high maintenance [laughs]. I need my food, my environment, my books, my peace. Often those requirements are satisfied by my rooftop in Manhattan though.'

What is your favourite sea view?

'There's seeing a view and then there's the remarkableness of coming upon land when you've been at sea, which is another kind of sea view. That happened a lot in the marines and there's something special about glimpsing islands from a warship. I was in the forces for three years. It was a wonderful adventure. You learn a lot about endurance, sacrifice, camaraderie and spirit.'

What music would you take to your fantasy island?

'I love jazz, I love classical, then, of course, I'd have to include Frank Sinatra...
I'm a Brooklyn boy!'

'I FELL ASLEEP ON A MALDIVES BEACH AND WOKE UP WITH ROBERT DE NIRO LYING NEXT TO ME'

What books would you take?

'I read a lot. I'm reading something by Karen Armstrong; I'm reading something by Donna Tartt; I'm reading *Animal Farm* by George Orwell again. I read a lot of books at once. I think it's because of my weak mind. I'm trying to strengthen it.'

What could you not be without?

'My wife and son. If I were stranded, I'd try to get back to them wherever they might be.'

Are you more Manhattan or Maldives?

'There's a song that goes "Brooklyn is my home sweet home", so that's my answer, but I've been to the Maldives and I wouldn't say no to it. I remember falling asleep on the beach and waking up with Robert De Niro lying next to me. We had gone together though...'

What do you love about Manhattan?

'I suppose everybody's hometown is their true romance. This interview keeps making me think of the songs from *West Side Story*! That's probably the movie I've seen

most often. You should try to watch it at least once a year, it's genius: the music, the choreography, the direction, everything.'

You went to school on Coney Island, what was it like?

'It was our playground growing up. We were there every day getting hot dogs and trying to sneak into steeplechases because we couldn't afford them. They threw me out of high school for playing truant too many times. They had no regard for the art I was trying to perfect, of sneaking into places!'

Do you still go back there?

'A few years ago they asked me to be the king of the Coney Island Mermaid Parade and I couldn't have been more honoured. I saw the faces of people I grew up with; it was real hometown stuff and so much fun. After that, I told Lou Reed we had to go back together and we did.'

Do you remember the first time you went to Manhattan?

'I do! It was me, Arnie Abrahams, Fred Kalkstein and Mark Reiner. I fell asleep on the way back and they tied my shoelaces together. So when I got up, I fell straight over. Those are my friends. Geniuses.'

What is your favourite island?

'The Italian islands are beautiful – but my favourite? Are you trying to get me killed? I love Capri, Ponza. I also like the Greek islands, Santorini and that whole group.'

You filmed The Piano in New Zealand...

'New Zealand! There's an island for you. Beautiful. We had gone down to the beach to shoot, and there were a lot of people setting up for the scene with Holly Hunter coming in on a boat. There was a Maori woman playing my wife, and she was at the water by herself making what looked like ritualistic movements, so I walked down and asked her what she was doing. She said, "I'm asking the sea to welcome us."

Harvey Keitel was speaking to Francesca Babb. He stars in 'Youth', out on 29 January



odern luxury isn't just physical – it's also deeply entwined with emotion. It's that feeling of being antipated – when the waiter knows before you even ask that you prefer a slice of lime in your G&T; it's getting a cold towel just as you think you might have to retreat to the shade on a hot day; it's getting the perfect wine to complement your meal that also 'happens' to feature one of your favourite blends; it's the surreal experience of being able to lay your towel on your favourite corner of half an acre of freshly-cut grass on top deck; it's being

taken to unforgettable places off the beaten track that feel as though you are the first to have set sight on them. Such personalised modern luxury is simply part of the unique experience on a Celebrity Cruises holiday. So are positively sumptuous contemporary suites, with 85 per cent featuring private balconies; a ratio of one staff member to every two guests (with 24-hour room service), and a personal butler in every suite. Like to dine out? Up to 12 restaurants include the Celebrity Cruises' award-winning signature options, from a fun-filled culinary adventure in Qsine

(you order from an iPad menu) or artful Italianinspired dishes at Tuscan Grille, to a gourmet tasting in Murano that is guaranteed to inspire all five senses. All are complemented, naturally, by offerings from one of the most extensive wine collections – and sommelier teams – at sea. And in between you can partake in various sports, lounge by the vast pool or indulge in some serious spa spoiling in the divine (and unashamedly state-of-the-art) Canyon Ranch SpaClub – the largest SpaClub at sea today.

All this before you even step ashore at one of Celebrity Cruises' many extraordinary destinations (280 in all, across seven continents). This is definitely our kind of cruising. And even more so when you realise that the personalised touches continue even when you go ashore to explore.





Take Celebrity Cruises' new Arabian Gulf cruise, starting from Abu Dhabi - a must-do destination on the global map. Before you've set sail, you might have taken a panoramic city drive, soaking up Abu Dhabi's culture, architecture and historic landmarks, before an opulent tea to incredible views atop Jumeirah at Etihad Towers Hotel. Or a tour of the magnificent Grand Mosque – the final resting place of His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan - founder and first President of the UAE, before visiting a Heritage Village, depicting the daily activities of the Arab community prior to the discovery of oil. Or perhaps revel in the thrill of a high-octane speedboat ride along Abu Dhabi's stunning coast, spending the day enjoying the open water panoramics and taking in Abu Dhabi's beautiful Corniche waterfront from a fabulous perspective.

From Abu Dhabi you will sail on to Dubai to soak in another wonderful world of gleaming skyscrapers; fashionable malls; pristine coastline; natural islands; serene desert; cool oasis and cosmopolitan cities – not to mention anything from sand surfing to wakeboarding, kayaking to camel trekking. Then it is on to Oman, where ancient traditions hold true among a spectacular backdrop of russet mountains, wind-swept deserts and untouched coastline. And finally it is across the seas to India, home to hidden jungles, beautiful beaches, exquisitely carved temples, crumbling old fortresses, a wealth of sacred sites and rituals and some of the most colourful festivals on earth.

This is a cruise of contrasts – of old and new, of continents and cultures – providing a whole new perspective on oceanic travel. But then, that is precisely what Celebrity Cruises is all about.

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For further details and reservations, please visit celebritycruises.co.uk, call the UK team on 0800 240 4258 or contact your travel agent.



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Vogue Café Moscow Kuznetsk Bridge 7/9, Moscow, Russia

Vogue Café at The Dubai Mall Dubai, UAE

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ISLANDFLAVOURS

Food and drink fixes from Taipei Sri Lanka Hong Kong Barbados

EDITED BY FIONA KERR

TABLE TO BOOK

Taipei is the world's top street-food spot but now a prodigal chef is gaining cred for a smarter set-up

The Taiwanese capital has always thought with its stomach, but often quantity triumphed quality. Now the island's star chef, André Chiang - whose restaurants in Singapore and Paris induce wide-eyed wonder - has fashioned a new template for the city with Raw, a gallery-like space where the undulating timber hanging from the ceiling is as striking as his take on the nation's food. The menu is an enchanting exercise in surprise: a grid of ingredients (kelp jus, Chinese olive) morph into fanciful creations, formed as much by what's fresh in the market as Chiang's Asian roots and classic French training. Above all, eating here is undiluted entertainment, from the cutlery that appears from its own little drawer underneath the table to the finale: a local delicacy of pineapple cake presented as three frozen cubes. ED PETERS www.raw.com.tw. About £80 for two



WORLD ON A PLATE

THE INGREDIENT: COCONUT

EAT ME

By Joanna Weinberg

If you are able to fly off to a palm-fringed island, now would be your moment. If time, money, family or work is too much of an impediment, consider instead a visit by way of coconut. Impossible to describe its distinctive flavour as anything other than simply 'tropical', it is the ultimate in armchair-travel ingredients, transporting you instantly to a scene at odds with this dank, grey English winter.

Coconuts are not bound by geography. Name a perfect beach, from Barbados to the Maldives, and it will most likely be fringed by coconut palms. This has much to do with its horticultural preferences – it is happiest on sandy soil, needs immense amounts of sunshine, a good deal of humidity and has no problem with salinity. Hello, tropical-island paradise.

No one can quite agree where the coconut originally hails from, but draw a belt around the centre of the earth and you will find coconuts nearby. They have been nourishing people since we first existed – in fact, the oldest coconut fossil dates back to more than 37 million years ago. Yet they have only recently been claimed by the nutritional gang. All of a sudden it seems impossible to hide from coconut-related products: milk for cereal, oil for frying, water for hydrating. I have even heard a nutritionally passionate friend claim that coconut water is the closest natural liquid to breast milk.

For me, it heads up a list of ingredients traditionally associated with sweet dishes that become far more interesting in savoury form: yogurt, cinnamon, vanilla. Use it well and it will bring a subtle sweetness and depth to all sorts of unexpected dishes. Cook rice in a mixture of half coconut milk and half water and it becomes so much more than padding – delicious with fish

I HAVE EVEN HEARD A CLAIM THAT COCONUT WATER IS THE CLOSEST NATURAL LIQUID TO BREAST MILK

dusted with a little chilli, coriander, cumin and turmeric and roasted in the oven. Or mix flakes of the stuff with fresh, grated ginger, garlic and lemongrass, add to a stir fry of green beans or shredded cabbage, and you arrive at a feast rather than a side.

Per capita, Sri Lanka is second only to the Philippines in terms of coconut production. It's hard to find a dish there that doesn't include it in some form, from an everyday fish curry to the porridge-like *kola kenda*, consumed at the Vesak festival. My favourite is Sri Lankan-inspired slow-roast lamb shoulder – all subtlety and fragrance and the perfect version of Sunday lunch if you're hankering to be somewhere far from home.

DRINK MF

By Malcolm Gluck

Such a dish as spicy, coconut-marinated lamb requires a stunning red of character yet with a sense of humour. Now, humour in red wine is not all that common (the first look at a glass of Champagne, on the other hand, makes me smile). But before we get to that handsome red, let me introduce you to a couple of insular wines suitable for glugging as you peel your ginger. A cook needs refreshment while strutting their stuff, and since the dish in question may require you to go shopping in unfamiliar places for Sri Lankan spices, so it is with my bottles here. For the wines I am recommending are on sale at Budgens and Londis (for £9.99). Hands up how many *Condé Nast Traveller* readers have ever set foot in either? If the adventure sounds too much, you can try Oddbins (where they ask a straight tenner for each bottle). Both wines, a white and a red, come from the excellent

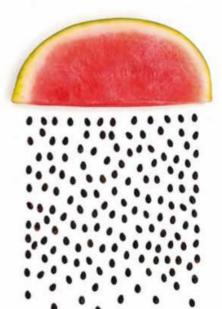
IT'S A RED TO MAKE YOU SMILE BECAUSE IT CARRIES, INEFFABLY, A TOUCH OF SUN WITH IT

organic producer Feudo di Santa Tresa of Vittoria in south-eastern corner of the island of Sicily. Rina Ianca 2014, the white, is a blend of the local Grillo and the swankier, more cosmopolitan Viognier. It has a remarkably smoky aroma, which belies its crispness and slightly salty finish. Frappato 2014, made from the local grape of the same name, is a red but it also needs chilling. It has a teasing hint of marzipan to it along with a touch of juniper. But such a light red – pedants might say frivolous – is no match for that lamb-dish recipe and so we must visit another Mediterranean island, and an altogether posher wine merchant, for this bottle.

Domaine Saparale Vin de Corse Sartene 2013 is just the wine we need, for it has the profundity required to handle the ingredients but is not solemn – like, say, a Bordeaux or a Barolo. Philippe Farinelli has fashioned a red of delicious richness using two of western Corsica's intensely local grape varieties, Nielluccio and Sciacarello. While not overburdened with tannins, it delivers sufficient heft to live with the spices in the dish. And it's a red to make you smile because it carries, ineffably, a touch of the sun with it, along with more than a suggestion of its herbily aromatic provenance. It transports you, therefore, to the place it comes from. It costs a smidgeon under £15 at Yapp Brothers (+44 1747 860423 or sales@yapp.cop.uk), and I don't believe even EasyJet can fly you to the island for that sum. Domaine Saparale Vin de Corse Sartene 2013 is, then, for my money as much as yours, something of a bargain.

ISLAND FLAVOURS





ART FEED

'I love the island of Paros in the Cyclades,' says artist Sarah Illenberger. 'My parents used to have a house there and its port, Naoussa, is a magical place – I sold my first collages there aged five.' Today, her vivid photographs reimagine everyday foods in witty new guises, like her 'Tutti Frutti' series, which sprang from a holiday market stroll. 'I love pineapples especially,' she says. 'They are such a well-designed fruit, plus you can make tropical cocktails from them!' www.sarahillenberger.com



My favourite island is... Antiqua THOMASINA MIERS

Owner of Wahaca restaurants, TV chef, food writer and spice fiend

'Antigua doesn't have the high glamour and exclusivity of nearby Nevis, St Lucia or St Barth's, but its charm and idiosyncrasies have built it a loyal

following. I discovered this soon after I started going there to visit my in-laws, bumping into friends at its chaotic, infinitesimally small airport and constantly meeting Antigua enthusiasts once home again. I was slow to climb aboard with the ragtag bunch of sea dogs and yachties at English Harbour, with their obsession over boats and the ocean, but I was soon won over by the absurdly easy, generous, take-it-or-leave-it attitude that seems to be a universal characteristic of all Antiguans. Then there is the pace of life; I can unwind here faster than anywhere else. People don't mind who you are or what you do, where you've come from or where you're going, they are just happy to welcome you into the island's warm embrace. Here, like nowhere else, I live by the sun, going to bed soon after it sets and waking when it rises, often at five in the morning when the air is deliciously cool and the views are magnificent in the early-dawn light. I spend my time walking along the tracks of 18th-century settlements from Nelson's time, and even older Meso-Indian

ruins from as far back as 2,400 Bc. Quiet coves hide stunning, picturesque beaches, where you

can gaze into the clear blue water and allow your thoughts to wander. At night I scout around for the best local food and am mostly delighted with what I find: warm, aromatic curries rolled tightly in chewy roti wraps; jerk chicken or headily spiced, braised goat. I marvel at how good the bottled beer tastes in this gorgeous climate, not to mention the dark rum, sweet limes and sun-drenched fruit. Antigua, when will you have me back?'



photographs: mirjam bleeker; tara fisher; anna koppmann



Theo Hutchcraft, the vocal half of the Manchester-based, Europe-conquering synth duo (below right), sings for his supper

SPLURGE TREAT? 'Hawksmoor in London. They do an incredible steak, of course, but the monkfish is great too. We've eaten all over the place but us Brits have some really excellent food.' STREET EAT? 'Coney Island: it's the ultimate place for all-American junk food with hot dogs, candy floss and ice cream right along the seafront. It's a key part of what makes it such a cool place. Well, that and cult movie The Warriors.'

SIGNATURE DISH? 'I grew up learning to cook curry. My parents made it all the time, always incredibly hot, which is probably where my insane tolerance for spices has come from. I can make a mean one from scratch.'

GO-TO DRINK? 'I love Islay whisky, such as Ardbeg and Laphroaig, from the Inner Hebrides – rich, smoky and peaty.'

FOOD TO FLY FOR? 'Japanese,' because everything is just so bizarre and different. The detail, care and passion that is put into it and the ritual of eating is so special. I've had the most delicious and most bizarre food ever there.'

STRANGEST SNACK? 'I ate puffin in Iceland, which was actually rather nice. The thought of it was more peculiar

than the actual taste, which was a lot like pigeon. In Japan, I was coerced into trying a special dish of fermented (ie rotting) beans. It was served in a cup and it looked and smelled like rancid vomit. It took ages to get the spoon to my mouth but weirdly it tasted nothing like the way it smelled and was all right. By all right I mean bearable.'

DESERT ISLAND INGREDIENTS?

'Rice, beans, hot sauce. I could happily live off that. I'd also smuggle in some apple seeds. I've probably eaten an apple every single day of my life.'

BEST CUP OF COFFEE? 'Shoreditch Grind on Old Street. We recorded some of our new album in a tiny studio upstairs and I had their house blend on tap!'

GUILTY PLEASURE? 'Most people hate them and look at me like I'm about 90 years old when I pull them out but I always have a packet of Fisherman's Friend in my pocket. Original flavour, no gimmicks. I particularly love the way the packaging is so robust, like some kind of NASA product.'

Hurts' new album 'Surrender' is out now. They play London, Manchester and Glasgow on 11-13 Feb (www.informationhurts.com)





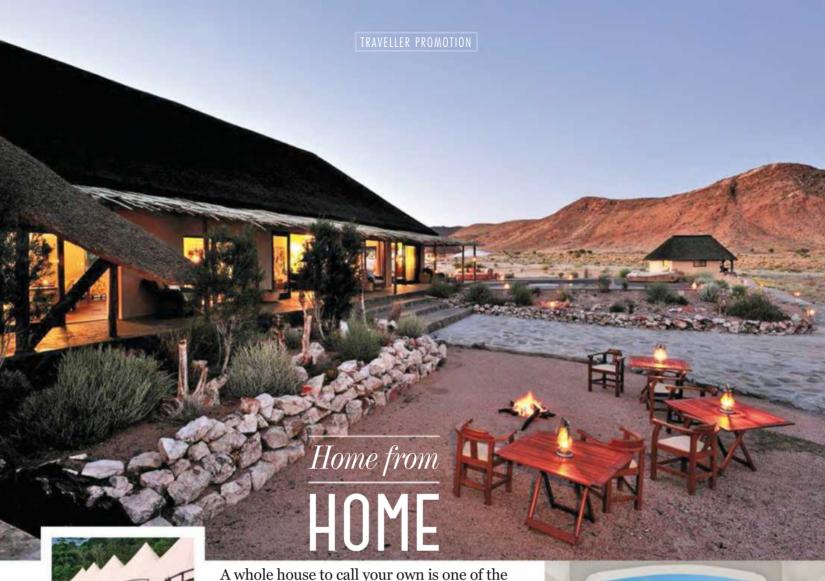
Nobody is quite sure why rum is called rum. The name might derive from rumbullion, a lovely term for 'an uproar, a great tumult'. In any case, when it was first produced, in Barbados in the 1650s, it was known as kill-devil. 'A hot, hellish and terrible liquor', best employed for medicinal rather than recreational purposes. In Haiti it became a necessary ingredient in any voodoo ceremony intended to summon the warrior spirit Ogoun. Those possessed by Ogoun were entitled to call for rum with the words 'Gren mwe ffret', which apparently translates as 'My testicles are cold'. One to try next time you're at The Connaught.

Then, as now, rum varied enormously in flavour, colour, aroma and quality from plantation to plantation

IN HAITI, IT WAS USED IN VOODOO RITUALS TO SUMMON THE WARRIOR SPIRIT OGOUN

and island to island. Broadly speaking, there are two main categories: 'traditional' or 'industrial' rum, made from molasses, a syrupy by-product of the sugar-refining process; and the less common rhum agricole, made from sugarcane juice.

Though quintessentially Caribbean, rum is also the most cosmopolitan of drinks. The sugarcane from which it comes originated in Papua New Guinea and travelled slowly across the globe. Chinese traders took it to India; Alexander the Great introduced it to the Middle East; the Moors brought it to the Mediterranean; it only arrived in the West Indies with Christopher Columbus. Today rum is produced and consumed all over the world, proving the truth of WC Fields's observation that 'All roads lead to rum.' STEVE KING



ounded in 2005, HomeAway is leading the charge in flexible home-from-home holidays. It now has more than a million properties in its portfolio, with everything from great value villas to uber-luxurious houses, and something to suit every size of party from two to 32. More and more people are realising the benefits of staying in their own home or villa as opposed to a hotel – particularly families and groups of friends. The privacy, space, freedom and

flexibility that HomeAway provides is a total nobrainer. And we're not just talking a seaside cottage in Cornwall – its current offering covers a staggering 190 countries topped off by a large dose of luxury, piles of quirkiness and oodles of wow factor. This is a growing wave of travel, and one that we're all for.

best ways to upgrade your holiday. No more sharing swimming pools or buffet breakfasts – with HomeAway you can holiday your own way. We take a peak at some of their best holiday houses on offer in 2016

> It's hard to skim the surface of the million-plus properties but those that caught our eye ranged from an Irish castle to an enormous 6,000 square-foot jazz mansion in Harlem. There are grown-up tree houses like Mahinui Na Lani in Hawaii with its bamboo bedroom, hot tub and volcano setting to only-accessible-by-boat floating river tents in Tatai, Cambodia. Thousands and thousands of beach properties are a click away including the oceanfront Fushi in Grenada and Sri Lanka's fully staffed South Point Villa and South Point Abbey. Croatia is currently in the cool gang but head beyond Hvar and visit Vis, an unsung gem of an island with a host of villas including the luxury Tempera with its idyllic waterfront setting. Further afield, explore Muscat from an Omani villa in Barr Al Jissah (complete with access to all the facilities of the



Shangri-La Resort); or for an adventure like no other, be spellbound by Namibia and the Sandfontein game retreat. Discover the true silence and beauty of this African country from just five thatched bungalows with 200,000 acres of wilderness on your doorstep.

We love the sheer range of properties, the inspirational destinations and the no compromise attitude. HomeAway provides the whole family with the space to create memories that will last a lifetime. Start searching for your dream holiday at homeaway.co.uk

Clockwise from main: Sandfontein game retreat, Namibia; Oceanfront Fushi Villa, Grenada; Pool at Sandfontein; Floating river tents, Tatai. Cambodia

ISLAND FLAVOURS

Eat the streets

Right at the western end of Hong Kong Island, the former meatpacking district of Kennedy Town (more of a village, really) is now carving out a new reputation for its easygoing foodie hangouts

10AM: BRUNCH

Kinsale, 2-5 New Praya

With a nod to Hong Kong's maritime history, Kinsale's best brunch dishes are crab scrambled eggs and a poached lobster omelette. Kick-start the day with an Emerald Bubble (fresh kiwi and Prosecco). www.kinsale.com.hk

1.30PM: LUNCH

The Pierside, 1B Davis Street

Veteran restaurateur Terance Wong runs a very smart set-up here, with steak and lobster headlining. The set lunch (for about £12) is remarkably good value, and the restaurant has been designed with floral-tiled walls and brightly lit display cabinets. www.facebook.com/thepiersidehk

3PM: COFFEE

Waffling Beans, 4-8 North Street

The owner's Taiwanese, the café's Belgian, the staff are Filipino: this is a very K-Town sort of place, with tempting waffles (including a savoury herb one), artisan coffees and – most importantly – a vibe that invites lingering. www.facebook.com/wafflingbeans

4.30PM: SNACKS

Sunday's Grocery, 66-68 Catchick Street Falafel, roast pork bun with avocado, mint and red cabbage,

Falafel, roast pork bun with avocado, mint and red cabbage, hummus: here's a world tour of quick bites. There's also a dangerous selection of Japanese whisky and craft beers – the wall-mounted bottle opener by the door gets a lot of use. www.sundaysgrocery.com

8PM: DINNER

Chino, 1B-1C New Praya

Former Nobu chef Erik Ido's pairing of Mexican food and Japanese techniques has been a hit. Nozaki beef and chicken-and-egg tostada are both excellent and the minimalist monochrome contrasts neatly with the streetscape outside. About £75 for two; www.chinohk.com

10PM: DRINKS

Missy Ho's, 48 Forbes Street

A stout wooden door guards the entrance to this rather sexy speakeasy, which serves sake (Karakuchi Junmai is deliciously subtle) and cider cocktails. www.casteloconcepts.com/our-venues/missy-hos ED PETERS



PHOTOGRAPH: JULIE MARIE CRAIG/OFFSET.COM



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Clockwise from far left: Il Riccio at D-Hotel Maris Turkey: Poolside at D-Hotel; Four Seasons Florence, Italy: Suite at the Four Seasons Florence; Castell Son Claret, Mallorca



BEST EUROPEAN

of the jetlag

®Four Seasons Florence, Italy

No other city says 'I love you' quite like Florence. Home to Michelangelo's David, Botticelli's Birth of Venus and the prettiest cobbled streets on the planet, it's a heady mix of history and beauty. It took seven years to convert this grand Renaissance palazzo into a Four Seasons hotel, and no two rooms are the same. Some feature frescoes, others vaulted ceilings or stuccoes – every inch painstakingly restored, and somehow. 15th-century works of art sit perfectly alongside flat-screen TVs and iPod docks. This extraordinary property is also home to the city's largest private garden; filled with fountains, sculptures and sequoia trees, plus minutes away, there's the Uffizi gallery, the Duomo and Florence's markets to explore. Make sure you're back in time for dinner though, the hotel's Michelin-starred Il Palagio is not to be missed

fourseasons.com/florence

(D) D-Hotel Maris, Turkey

A high-styled haven adored by sun-worshippers and supermodels, D-Hotel is top of our list for modern-day honeymooners. Presiding over a rugged peninsula, this adults-only fun palace has five private beaches – the brightest crescents of white this side of the Indian Ocean, plus a clutch of excellent restaurants (including the hit Japanese Zuma). Throw in DJs spinning tunes after hours, and a gaggle of gleaming yachts straining for open waters, and it's no wonder fashionistas are choppering in from Istanbul for the weekend. Rooms are sleek, cut from travertine tiles, bronze and dark wood, and there's a sumptuous ESPA spa, but really it's all about the outdoors here - the whole area is a protected nature reserve, hence gloriously unspoilt and yours for the taking. dhotel.com.tr

(1) Castell Son Claret, Mallorca

Occupying a 12th-century castle, this secluded Spanish hideaway is perfect for couples seeking solitude after the celebrations are over. Waiters speak in hushed tones, spa invitations come wrapped in twine, and almonds and olives (harvested on site) are handed round at cocktail hour. Terraces of orange and pomegranate trees cascade down to ornamental pools providing the perfect backdrop for a romantic stroll, Bellini-inhand, and the rugged surrounding area lends itself to wondrous hikes and bike rides. Standards are sky-high throughout, yet couples are left entirely to themselves. You even won't find a 'do not disturb sign' in your room - just a leather tag that reads 'siesta'. How chic. castelsonclaret.com





1. 'MADELINE' CHEMISE, £89, FIGLEAVES .COM 2. DIOR SIDERAL

FASHION FLIP FLOPS £30 HAVAIANAS-STORE COUK 5 DHAKA

WATERCOLOUR PRINT WOOL SCARE £95 AOUASCUTUM COM

SUNGLASSES, £280, DIOR.COM 3. THE BELLE CROCHET BRA BIKINI, £152, ZIMMERMANNWEAR.COM. 4. HAVAIANAS HIGH

Suite dreams

For sunshine and serenity, look no further than Amanzoe (aman.com) in Greece. With vast suites, a private beach club and one of the best spas in Europe, it's got 'honeymoon' written all over it. For more information about getting married or booking a honeymoon in Greece, go to visitgreece.gr

TRAVELLER PROMOTION

TURQUOISE

The colour of honeymoons

Lots of travel companies organise honeymoons, but only one specialises in them. Turquoise Holidays is without doubt, the UK's most romantic travel company



In the know

Winner of best tour operator in our *Readers' Travel Awards 2015*, the Turquoise Holiday Company is currently on top of the world, scoring particularly highly for reliability and service. So if you're booking your holiday of

a lifetime, there is definitely no safer company to turn to. Not only is Turquoise passionate about travel, their expertise lies predominantly in creating unique honeymoons. Never selling without seeing, 30 members of staff have travelled to 40 different countries, checking out more than 400 hotels. Because of this guaranteed first-hand knowledge, Turquoise can be 100 per cent trusted on every recommendation.

No ordinary world

What we also love about Turquoise is that it's not just the predictable resorts on their books. There are, of course, the super-cool A-list haunts and private islands complete with butlers, but Turquoise is also partial to going off the beaten track and unearthing quirky hideaways. Get away from the norm with a bespoke Turquoise itinerary: an underthe-radar wilderness trip, an unlikely city/beach combo or some far-flung destination hopping. From surfing in Sri Lanka or

meeting giant tortoises in Seychelles to flying a glider in New Zealand or sleeping under African skies, there's a whole world beyond just petal-strewn beds.

Turquoise touches

It's the little extras that also set Turquoise apart. You always speak to the same specialist; there are lots of exclusive honeymoon offers; room upgrades are becoming the norm and they're known for throwing in a romantic surprise or two during your stay. For Turquoise it's the details that make the difference. They also run a unique gift list service, one that blends tradition with travel. Guests can contribute to the cost of the honeymoon or buy an experience - anything from a spa treatment or excursion to dinner or a bottle of champagne. Free of charge to run and overseen by a dedicated gift list coordinator, much like a Turquoise honeymoon, it consistently receives rave reviews.



Book an appointment with the Turquoise team in London or Beaconsfield and enjoy a glass (or two) of bubbles to celebrate. The two shops are open six days a week and evening appointments are also available. Stop dreaming and start planning with the help of the honeymoon experts. Visit turquoiseholidays.co.uk

To book your dream honeymoon call 01494 678400 or email enquiries@turquoiseholidays.co.uk



(1) Bulgari, London

The first hotel to be newly built in London for 20 years, the Bulgari is also a first-rate first night hotel. Catering to well-heeled Europeans, its 85 rooms and suites overlooking Hyde Park hark back to Bulgari's roots as a silversmith with plenty of shimmer and woven silk. Wash away your hangovers in the spa: a sunken Bond-style lair carved from onyx marble and sandblasted stone offering exotic Mauli treatments, or dine like royalty at Rivea, where menus are overseen by Alain Ducasse. Either way, you'll come away recharged and honeymoon-ready, with the perfect blow-dry (if you swing by the hotel's hair salon that is). bulgarihotels.com

(10) Thyme, Cotswolds

Celebrating the land, the seasons and everything local, Thyme is top choice for foodies. Occupying an immaculately restored 15thcentury manor house, a clutch of medieval barns and a Norman church, individual rooms have only recently been made available (it was previously private hire only). Bedrooms are plush vet understated with nods to the estate's farming heritage, and menus are inspired by whatever is ready to pick in the garden. Later this year, a small spa will be added, but for now, you can enjoy rambles around the countryside or take a cookery class for two. Make sure you ask for a late check-out; breakfast is a highlight here with bread and pastries baked on-site and eggs from Thyme's own chickens, geese and quail. thyme.co.uk

(1) The Victoria Inn, Holkham

For coastal high jinx, the Victoria Inn – a stone's throw from the wide-open sands of Holkham Beach – comes up trumps. Located at the gateway to Holkham Estate, home of the Earls of Leicester, this devilishly handsome hideaway has recently been revamped and is the essence of British romance. Ten suites come with elegant sitting rooms dotted with antiques gleaned from Holkham Hall's shadowy attics and wonderfully windswept Norfolk views. Famous for its appearance in the closing scenes of *Shakespeare in Love*, nearby Holkham beach provides the perfect backdrop for that first married stroll. *holkham.co.uk*











Clockwise from top: Suite at The Victoria Inn Holkham; The Victoria Inn sign; Holkham Beach; Tithe Barn at Thyme, Cotswolds; Rear view of Thyme House; Studio Suite at Bulgari, London



Somewhere in the world there is a place where two people can be alone, and the only clock-watchers are the sun and stars. No schedules. No distractions. No interruptions. Nothing but time.

Welcome to Rendezvous. Like its name, it is designed for couples. An intimate boutique resort on the island of Saint Lucia in the Caribbean Sea, secluded, tranquil and tailor-made for stolen moments. A corner of paradise reserved for two, it is a private oasis and — quite simply — the perfect setting for reconnecting, rediscovering and celebrating life's pleasures together.



With two miles of white sand beach and exotic tropical gardens - by - the - sea, the only outside influence here is entirely at your discretion – impeccable service, exceptional food, and a wealth of amenities and activities.

Discover Rendezvous And find the time and place to steal away together. To learn more call 0203 096 1608 or visit www.theromanticholiday.com.







Fiercely remote, nestled in southern Utah's canyonlands, Amangiri is an impressive feat of architecture - think James Bond not John Wayne. Book a suite in the desert wing and your backyard will be several hundred acres of prickly pear cacti, towering hoodoos and rolling tumbleweed. Inside, bleached Aspen wood and native Indian knick-knacks give the place an air of the Navajo, and at the heart of the hotel lies one of sexiest swimming pools in the world, carved round a 165,000 million year-old rock escarpment. Adventure comes in the form of epic hikes, rock climbing, hot air balloon rides and motorboating on nearby Lake Powell. Ask nicely and a Navajo elder might even swing by and give your marriage a blessing. aman.com

(1) Casa Flotanta, Costa Rica

Want to avoid hotels altogether? Consider renting this sensational South American super-villa. Designed in 2014 by talented Costa Rican architect Benjamin Garcia Saxe, Casa

to a whole new level. Built to 'float' above the canopy of the rainforest, it literally does just that. Comprising three contemporary pods connected by bamboo bridges and walkways, simply waking up in the morning is an adventure here: parrots squawk poolside, monkeys leap through the trees, and lying in wait beyond all that untamed jungle? Booming waves beckon.

For information, visit Casa Flotanta's FaceBook page at facebook.com/casaflotanta



Clockwise from above: Desert Lounge Suite at Amangiri, Utah; Casa Flotanta, Costa Rica; Bathroom and view at Amangiri



magine it. Barely a heartbeat after your big day, you and your other half are floating in a canoe in the Okavango Delta. Ahead of you a herd of elephants gently rumble to each other as they make their way across an islet. You hold your breath as they splash through the watery channel just feet away, a baby clutching its mother's tail. You wait until the last lumbering bottom disappears from view; crack open the Champagne as the sun sets over the watery expanse; then head back to your private suite, soak in an open-air roll-top bath and slide into your fourposter bed, with nothing between you and the starstudded African night skies. Or perhaps vou'd prefer to get up close and personal with rare mountain gorillas. At Sanctuary Gorilla Forest Camp, nestled deep within Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest a UNESCO World Heritage Site - you might not even have to leave your private tent (one of only eight) to make your acquaintance with its famed local neighbours: silverbacks have been known to wander through the camp. But if you do, you could also discover a theatrical landscape of volcanoes, jagged valleys, waterfalls and lakes; meet local Batwa

Pygmies; and visit a philanthropy project at Bwindi Community Hospital. Then it's back to camp to luxuriate in your huge bathtub, beautifully positioned for eyeballing the colourful birdlife in the treetop canopy, before cocktails on your private viewing deck as night enfolds the jungle in inky blackness.

Not remote enough? For the ultimate one-on-one time, why not be whisked by helicopter through the clouds of British Columbia, to your own mountaintop hideaway. Set high above Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, this private tented retreat is surely the ultimate in heavenly honeymoons - and not just thanks to its elevated position. Think a private lake; a five-course dinner under the stars; curling up together inside a luxurious canvas cocoon; and dawn truly a deux (unless a curious elk wanders by), before another glorious day spent spotting black bears, wolves, whales and orcas - or trying your hand at anything from whale-watching to mountain zip-lining. "Wonderful", we hear you cry... "But what about some downtime?" A&K's fabulous array of twincentre trips mean you can have the best of both worlds. Go wine-tasting in Australia, then head to Fiji for some paradisiacal pampering. Explore Mayan ruins in Guatemala, then bliss out on a beach in





Belize. Watch one of the world's greatest wildlife spectacles on Tanzania's Serengeti plains, then find your zen in Zanzibar. Or even simply 'fly and flop', revelling in rare relaxation in some of the most beautiful resorts in the world. Whatever you and your other half's dreams are made of, there's no better time to start making them happen than on honeymoon.

Whether you're looking for barefoot luxury, twin destination breaks or once in a lifetime safari/adventure experiences, A&K's knowledgeable and innovative travel

Clockwise from top left: Baros, Maldives; Aerial view Clayoquot Cloud Camp, British Columbia; Star Bath at Sanctuary Baines'Camp, Botswana; Wildlife at Sanctuary Baines'Camp consultants can help you to plan your perfect honeymoon. Travellers can now collect Avios when booking a holiday or renting a villa or chalet with Abercrombie & Kent. Members of British Airways Executive Club, Avios Travel Rewards Programme or Iberia Plus earn two Avios for every £1 spent with Abercrombie & Kent.*

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I. SAILOR STRIPES TRIANGLE BIKINI TOP, £154, SAILOR STRIPES HIGH WAIST BIKINI BRIEFS, £144, BOTH LAPERLA.COM 2. PANAMA HAT WITH NAYY BAND, £160, FRESCOBOLCARIOCA.COM 3. BEACH CUSHION IN COTTON TERRY TOWELLING, £200, HERMES BOND ST STORE OR HERMES.COM 4. NOHO ESSEX CONVERTIBLE BACKPACK, £545, UK.TUMI.COM 5. AIX SLIDE IN PALE GOLD, £90, FITFLOP, CO.UK



adventure moon² cruciall special

© Constance Tsarabanjina, Madagascar

Ah Madagascar... Where else do you find chameleons the size of your fingernail or shy little bamboo lemurs that only come out at night? Everywhere you turn, there's something to marvel at in this extraordinary land before time. A top choice for nature-lovers, you can't beat Tsarabanjina's remote location off the north coast, and with just 25 thatched villas enveloped by a kaleidoscope of flora and fauna, privacy comes with lashings of adventure. Add in the resort's charming French-speaking staff and largely European clientele, and it's easy to see why people rave about this refreshingly non-naff private island paradise. <code>tsarabanjina.com</code>

(1) Necker Belle, British Virgin Islands

Take to the high seas on Richard Branson's catamaran, Necker Belle, and you'll be the envy of every yachtsman. At 32 metres, it's one of the largest vessels of its kind and can reach speeds of up to 20 knots. With four cabins, there's plenty of room to spread out, and

crucially, no danger of the crew disrupting any special moments. Days are spent carving up the waves on water skis, scuba diving or catching rays on the cat's salt-sprayed trampoline – and as comfortable as the cabins are, sleeping on the upper deck under a blanket of stars is hard to beat. We recommend an eight-day charter around the British Virgin Islands taking in Tortola, Norman Island, Peter Island, Virgin Gorda and Jost Van Dyke. Eat your heart out Peter Pan (and Wendy). virginlimitededition.com

(1) ION Hotel, Iceland

Wildly romantic, this ice-cool hideaway is never more alluring than in the winter months when deep snow conjures a magical monochromatic landscape of white powder and black volcanic rock. An off-the-radar, hipster kind of place (don't expect five-star luxury here: rooms are more industrial-chic than indulgent), later this year, the hotel is adding a handful of bigger suites perfect for honeymooners. Wild swimming in steaming lagoons, horse riding across lunar icescapes, scuba diving between tectonic plates and scoping the skies for northern lights are just a few of the activities on offer, and back at the hotel, Ion's quirky restaurant, Silfra, is run by two of the best chefs on the island, so you're in very good hands. ioniceland.is

Winter wildcard

For an adrenalin-filled snow-moon, consider Switzerland's Bern-Bernese Oberland region. Home to breathtaking icescapes, Europe's longest toboggan run (15km) and some of the country's most spectacular mountains, it's sure to set the heart pounding whether you ski or not. myswitzerland.com



A Sandals Luxury Included® Honeymoon caters to your every desire at the most decadently romantic resorts in the world. And best of all, it's all included, all unlimited, all the time. Endless land and water sports, including scuba diving* and golf^. Gourmet Discovery Dining at up to 16 outstanding restaurants per resort and premium drinks including Robert Mondavi Twin Oaks wines served at up to 11 bars. At Sandals, love is all you need, because everything else is included!



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*Free for certified divers. ^Mandatory caddies at cost.











IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC

et on its own 60-acre private peninsula by arguably the best beach in Mauritius, Constance Le Prince Maurice feels a million miles away from reality. Time floats by in a turquoise and white tropical haze, and as the sign on the gatepost says, even the birds fly slower! Romance is definitely on the menu and luxury a certainty. The thatched stilted villas are a Mauritian one-off (all other island accommodation is currently land-based). We love the ultra-calm U Spa by Constance and the food is fabulous, particularly at Le Barachois. Reached through mangroves via lantern-lit pontoons, this gourmet hideout dishes up melt-in-the-mouth seafood on floating decks under the stars. Other gastro goodies include light spicy dishes at Archipel, beach dinners, and wine tasting in the Indian Ocean's largest wine cellar – the latest bottle count came in at 25,000! Room for romance: The Junior Suites on stilts are a honeymoon no-brainer.

Hot honeymoon offer: Couples can enjoy up to 80% off (depending on room category and dates) plus £100 per room per night resort credit (available in low season), gifts on arrival and one complimentary candlelit dinner.

SPARRY NIGHTS

A little slice of Indian Ocean heaven, picture-perfect Constance Ephélia is Seychelles at her most seductive. Situated between two of Mahé's most beautiful beaches Clockwise from above:
Junior suites on stilts at
Le Prince Maurice,
Mauritius; Water villa,
Halaveli, Maldives; Golf
at Lémuria, Seychelles;
Senior water villa at
Moofushi, Maldives;
Beach at Tsarabanjina,
Madagascar; Hillside
villas at Ephélia,
Seychelles

and overlooking Port Launay Marine National Park, Ephélia has honeymoon imprinted into its talcumsoft sand. The suites and villas are ultra-spacey, the décor sleek and contemporary, but it is the U Spa that remains the headline act. Not only is this the largest spa 'village' in the Indian Ocean, it is undoubtedly one of the best. Let post-wedding planning tension drift into the stratosphere with the help of tropical gardens, relaxation pools, a yoga pavilion, miracle-working therapists and a brilliant combo of Shiseido and local products. We love a place that takes its wellbeing super-seriously.

Room for Romance: The Spa Villas are sanctuaries complete with a private double treatment room, a lap pool and hot tub. Or for killer views bed down in a Hillside Villa complete with infinity pool.



Hot honeymoon offer: Couples can enjoy up to 60% off (depending on room category and dates) plus gifts on arrival.

PARADISE FOUND

One of our all-time favourite honeymoon spots is another Seychellois siren, Constance Lémuria on dreamy Praslin. This Leading Hotel of the World deals in unabashed luxury in a to-die-for location with a strong eco stance. It's a place where nature rules, where the beaches are squeaky clean and turtles come to nest. And there's not one, but three gorgeous beaches: Grande Anse Kerlan, Petite Anse Kerlan and Anse Georgette (often in the world's top ten). The beautiful suites and villas are a stone's throw from the shore and wow factor comes in many forms:





a three-level lap pool, a spa fest, a golf course complete Hot honeymoon offer: Save up to 80% (depending on room with sundowners on hole 15 and exquisite seafood. Room for romance: Any!

Hot honeymoon offer: Save up to 70% (depending on room category and dates), plus £100 per room per night resort credit (available in low season), gifts on arrival and treats during vour stav.

OCEAN OUTPOST

The uber-luxe Constance Halaveli in the Maldives is a go-to island escape for honeymooners. It floats like a five-star fantasy in the North Ari Atoll (a 20-minute seaplane hop from Malé). Shaped in the curve of a dhoni (traditional Maldavian boat) and home to the longest jetty in the Maldives, this is stilted heaven. The blink-bright sand and crystal-clear water attracts both romantics and divers. The underwater world is as spectacular as the overwater one, with regular sightings of dolphins, whale sharks, manta rays and shoal upon shoal of pantone-coloured tropical fish. Other must-dos are a sunset cruise, a day on a deserted island and post-wedding feasting at restaurants Jahaz, Jing and Meeru.

Room for romance: We love the Water Villas' high dhoni-shaped ceilings and infinity-edged plunge pools.

category and dates), plus \$100 per room per night resort credit (available in low season), gifts on arrival and treats during your stay.

BEACH BABE

Luxury, simplicity and a five-star all-inclusive option make Constance Moofushi unique to the Maldives. We love the barefoot-chic vibe and the fact that everything is taken care of. The beach is brilliantly big, the pool lovely, and the diving some of the best in the world. Marooned in the South Ari Atoll, Moofushi is perfectly placed for sighting stingrays, lionfish, snappers and eels as well as migrating mantas, whale sharks, dolphins and sea eagles. The spa is outstanding (particularly Ymalia's innovative bio-marine treatments), the sand-floored restaurant serves up belt-busting buffets and then there's the totally tropical Totem Bar, romantic ocean-side Alizee and Cinefushi (cinema on the beach). The vibe is young, fun and right up our strada.

Room for romance: Senior Water Villas get our vote for the over-ocean bath.

Hot honeymoon offer: Enjoy up to 60% off (depending on room category and dates), plus gifts on arrival and treats during your stay.



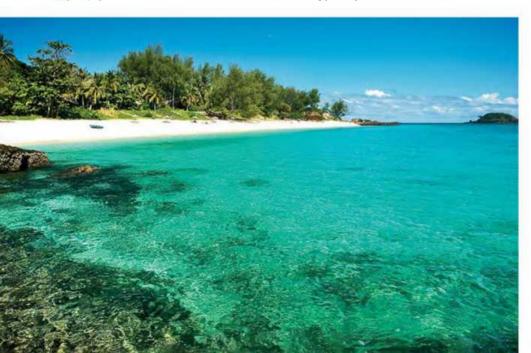
CRUSOF COOL

Get off the beaten track and head to a little private island, Constance Tsarabanjina, off the northwest coast of Madagascar - a sanctuary where time stands still and stress evaporates. Just 25 thatched eco villas pepper the ribbons of white sand, all look out to sea and all have a remote Crusoe-style vibe with a twist of Constance luxury. We love the simplicity, the hammocks, the sensational diving and stunning nature walks, and the all-inclusive policy. Feast guilt-free on fresh seafood and Malagasy specialties in the sand-floored restaurant; watch the sun go down over a cocktail or two and enjoy the hotel's relaxed no-shoe vibe.

Room for Romance: Villa number 15 feels extra special.

Hot honeymoon offer: Couples can enjoy up to 60% off (depending on room category and dates), plus gifts on arrival.

For more information go to constancehotels.com or to book please call 00 230 402 2772





(1) Desroches Island Resort, Seychelles

Despite being one of the furthest-flung islands in the Seychelles (230km south of Mahé) this private-island resort doesn't feel in the slightest bit cut off. In fact, it's one of the buzziest places in the archipelago thanks to a chic laid-back vibe and dress-down policy (staff wear sarongs). Measuring 6km by 1km, it's large enough to have its own runway so your arrival will be a glamorous one: via private plane. Sun-bleached villas are scattered all the way along the west coast; the east side, however, is untamed tropical jungle -nothing there bar a small tortoise sanctuary. Head that way on bikes and you can live out your castaway fantasies for real, beachcombing secluded coves, snorkelling coral-encrusted shallows or casting lines into the deep - the fishing here is second to none. desroches-island.com

(10) Raffles Praslin

A scenic 15-minute plane ride from Mahé, Praslin is the second largest island in the Seychelles and has no shortage of luxury digs – Raffles, on the north coast, is by far the most romantic though. Vast contemporary villas, a sensational spa and 24-hour butler service spell blissful days wafting from seashore to sushi bar and back again. The resort even has its own shisha lounge. Cobaltblue waters, swaying palm trees and blinding white shores are what bring honeymooners to the Seychelles, and here, these combine so

beautifully, easels are actually provided in rooms for guests to capture the scene on canvas. Anse Lazio, one of the most photographed beaches in the world is walking distance from Raffles, or for that back-to-nature experience, there's the wonderful island of Curieuse, where giant Aldabra tortoises roam. *raffles.com*

(1) Four Seasons Resort Sevchelles, Mahé

Hugging Mahé's southwest shoreline, a short hop from the airport, you can be out of your flight socks and into one of the Four Season's four-posters in half an hour. Immersed in nature, the resort occupies a wildly pretty hillside with treehousestyle villas peeping out from tangles of cinnamon, mango and frangipani trees. Take a milk bath, a yoga class or try your hand at meditation, it's all for the taking, but if that all sounds too virtuous, start your days as you mean to go on with a champagne breakfast. Down at Petite Anse beach, you'll find scenes from a Bounty commercial: waves lapping, arching coconut trees and little to do but flirt with the cocktail menu. Bottoms up. fourseasons.com



COSTOUUS ISLAND RETREATS

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There's nowhere quite like the Maldives... Pristine paradise islands surrounded by water the colour of Bombay Sapphire, and at One&Only Reethi Rah the fantasy is heightened even further with mansion-sized villas, world-class restaurants and a celebrity following that includes Sienna Miller and the Beckhams. Located halfway to the Maldives, Dubai is the perfect pitstop. Check in to One&Only's The Palm and you can get a headstart on that golden tan and pick up a few designer ensembles - it's just a short hop from Dubai's dazzling shopping malls. Make sure you leave time for a massage, the hotel's soon-to-be Guerlain spa, is a must-visit. oneandonlyresorts.com

(1) Tanzania & Zanzibar

A safari followed by an Indian Ocean beachflop is a classic honeymoon duo, and luxury tour operator Turquoise Holidays has one of the most alluring combinations we've seen: a few nights tracking paw-prints and sipping G&Ts at Azura Selous tented camp in Tanzania. followed by a week of barefoot luxury at the hippie-chic Fundu Lagoon in Zanzibar. At

Azura Selous, you'll be two of only 24 guests enjoying the thrill of the bush with game drives, nature walks and moonlit dinners in one of the largest protected nature reserves in Africa, while at Fundu Lagoon, it's all about the shimmering subterranean. turquoiseholidays.co.uk

(1) Abu Dhabi & Sri Lanka

For an amazing mix of cultures, Trailfinder's 'Sri Lanka in Style' tour takes some beating. It starts with a few days glitzing it up at the Ritz-Carlton Abu Dhabi Grand Canal, where you can make use of the hotel's sumptuous spa and private beach or check out the sights, swiftly followed by a captivating journey through some of Sri Lanka's most breathtaking landscapes. Days are taken at your own pace with a private driver, and nights are played out in some of the country's most elegant establishments including colonialera Cevlon Tea Trails, and Amangalla, a phenomenal heritage hotel set within the ramparts of Galle's 17th-century fort. Exquisite. trailfinders.com

twin trips Double the fun with these perfect honeymoon pairings

Clockwise from top left: Sandals Grande Saint Lucian Spa & Beach Resort, Saint Lucia; Pool and suite at One&Only Reethi Rah. Maldives; Beach, One&Only Reethi Rah; Wedding at The Palace of the Lost City Hotel, Sun International Group, South Africa







(1) French Polynesia & Los Angeles

A crazy-beautiful castaway experience paired with a sojourn in star-studded Hollywood has 'A List' written all over it. Renowned tour operator Turquoise has the ultimate twin-trip comprising five nights at French Polynesia's Le Taha'a Island Resort & Spa (a Relais & Chateaux property) where swoonworthy villas sit on stilts in a crystal-clear lagoon followed by a week at the Four Seasons Bora Bora, where Jennifer Aniston recently had her 'buddymoon'. On the homeward leg, some shopping and celebspotting in the city of angels is sure to fend off any post-moon blues. Your digs? The Beverly Wilshire where Pretty Woman was filmed of course. turquoise.co.uk

O Cape Town & Zambia

With properties scattered all across Africa, hotel group Sun International lends itself well to twin trips. Delivering sweeping views of Table Mountain, its Table Bay hotel in Cape Town is the place to get your bearings before heading off on safari. Grand and classic (make sure you take high tea), Nelson Mandela actually opened the hotel back in 1997, and its sister resort, the Royal Livingstone in Zambia, has equally good credentials. A superb choice for safari first-timers, the 173-room lodge sits on the banks of the Zambezi River just upstream from the mighty Victoria Falls - cue elephants at breakfast, zebras at tea time, and at sundown, a sweeping deck that puts the rest of Africa's drinking holes in the shade. suninternational.com

(1) Saint Lucia & Antigua

The Caribbean offers endless twindestination opportunities but moving around can add up. Book a stay at all-inclusive Sandals Halcyon Beach on scenic Saint Lucia, and you can check out two other nearby Sandals resorts as part of a brilliant new 'stay at one, play at three' initiative. That means 23 different places to eat, 21 places to drink and a whopping 10 swimming pools to dip your toes into. Once you are in superchilled Caribbean mode, it's only an hour's flight to Antigua for contrast. Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa takes pride of place on the island's most famous beach, Dickenson Bay, and is ideal for sun-worshippers and sailors alike. sandals.co.uk





I. ETHAN 60'S PRINT SCARF £65, AQUASCUTUM.COM 2. DIOR
'ABSTRACT' SUNGLASSES, £310..DIOR.COM 3. 'WEAVE-X'
SANDALS, £145, RUSSELLANDBROMLEY.CO.UK 4. LE DANSE DES
SLIPS SWIM SHORTS, £120, LESLIPFRANCAIS.COM/EN 5. HAT IN
PAPER BRAID, £290, HERMES.COM 6. MEN'S 'EARTHKEEPERS'
CLASSIC 2-EYE BOAT SHOE, £100, TIMBERLANDONLINE.CO.UK
7. 'HILTON' COTTON POLO, £75, AQUASCUTUM.COM



(1) Shangri-La's Le Touessrok Resort & Spa, Mauritius

Following an almighty revamp by Shangri-La Hotels, Le Touessrok is looking better than ever. Rooms have added Asian luxe, restaurants shine more radiant, and those picture-postcard views? Well, those will never change. Located on the east coast in Trou d'Eau Douce bay with four sandy beaches, this all-singing all-dancing 200-room retreat also happens to be the proud owner of two private islands – for Shangri-La guests only. Ilot Mangénie has a trendy beach club swarming with handsome butlers, and Ile aux Cerfs has an 18-hole golf course designed by Bernhard Langer. Sher-wing! <code>shangri-la.com</code>

(D) Pimalai Resort & Spa, Thailand

Situated on Koh Lanta, a short hop from Krabi, this laidback 121-room resort delivers what everyone ultimately wants from Thailand: Alex Garland's *The Beach*. Villas are simple and smart with polished teak floors and direct access to those swoon-worthy pure shores. Miles from any tourist hotspots, monkeys still rustle in the trees, eagles circle overhead and cicadas chirrup night and day. Best of all, Pimalai is an excellent base for exploring Lanta's marine national park – cue turtles and colourful coral gardens, plus the enchanting isles of Koh Rok and Koh Haa, a short boat ride away. *pimalai.com*

(1) The Mulia, Bali

A labyrinth of sleek lines, orchid motifs and fern-clad paths, this gargantuan beach resort offers honeymooners the world on a plate – and some. Here, 'size' equals 'more': more shimmering infinity pools, more cubic-metres of sand and more polished marble than the Taj Mahal. It's all terribly grand and thrillingly exotic. Down at the beach, the vibe is more Miami beachclub with rows of white leather sunloungers and ice-cold towels, and at sunset, there's no better place to be than The Mulia's Sky Bar. Where else would a G&T come with a slice of cucumber carved into a butterfly? themulia.com

(1) Casa Velas, Mexico

Reminiscent of a grand Spanish hacienda, Casa Velas is an excellent all-inclusive option. Rooms are grand yet homely with plenty of Latino flair, but it's what's beyond that really counts. When you're not swinging a golf club or being pummelled to oblivion in the spa, there are endless romantic sojourns to enjoy: from a smoochy dinner à deux in a sheltered cove across the bay, to snorkelling at Playa Escondida, a secret beach accessible only by swimming through a short tunnel. Great for 'do-ers', there's no risk of ennui at this hot Mexican retreat. hotelcasavelas.com

TRAVELLER PROMOTION

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- Cowshed Slender Cow Total Body, £105, cowshedonline.com
- QMS facial at Grace Medical Spa, £110, spabookings@ gracebelgravia.com
- Dr Sebagh Bespoke Lymphatic Drainage Facial, from £145, drsebagh.com



What is your go-to luggage brand and why?

I'm old-school when it comes to luggage so I love vintage Louis Vuitton – their Pégase Légère is practicality on wheels and the Keepall Bandoulière 60 is perfect for in-flight necessities such as a cashmere blanket, a travel pillow and eye mask - not to mention all the vital beauty products and a change of soft clothing.

When flying long haul, do you have any tips for looking your best

round-up Ask the expert... Thea Darricotte Retail Editor

at altitude? For me it's about looking the best when you land so drink plenty of water, avoid plane food and moisturise! I usually reject make-up in favour of of a face mask such as Sisley's Black Rose Cream Mask which I apply when I board and remove before landing. Don't neglect vour lips – Sensai's Cellular Performance Total Lip Treatment is the best that I've found, simply smooth over your lips and just over the edges for a sultry-soft pout when you land.

Which destination is next on your wish list

Retail Editor

Condé Nast Traveller

and why? I've just discovered Nimmo Bav Wilderness Resort in British Columbia and I'm desperate to go. Picture a cluster of cabins by a lake, vast mountains, dense rainforest, helicopter rides to glaciers, voga by the water, incredible wildlife and sensational food. Grizzly and black bear viewing is one of the options and superpods of whales have been known to swim past the bay - but best of all is the fact that it's kept intimate (there are only nine cabins) to ensure that everyone has an amazing experience.



OUR SERIES OF INSIDER GUIDES CONTINUES WITH...

SECRETISLES

BY SOPHIE CAMPBELL

We all know islands are a metaphor: for removal from the real world, for time standing still, and for escape. Their self-contained and detached nature is intriguing - you either love it or run screaming for the nearest overcrowded city - even more so if it features a mysterious owner, resident eccentric or private recording studio. The very act of taking a ferry or crossing a causeway is thrilling. And an island all to yourself is better still, as long as you choose your companions wisely. There are hundreds strewn around the British and Irish coasts. Here's a smattering of the best.

BEST FOR GRAND ARRIVALS

ISLE OF BARRA, WESTERN ISLES

Hebridean beaches are famously beautiful (on a good day): crescents of moon-white sand and ludicrously blue sea. But Barra's Cockle Strand has function as well as form: when the tide is out, it doubles as a runway. If the windsock's up, the beach is closed to allow Twin Otters to skitter in from Glasgow or private planes to land. Between flights, islanders pick cockles on the gleaming shoreline. For a less dramatic arrival, ferries dock at Castlebay, which does indeed have a castle, the sturdy Kisimul, on a rocky islet in the bay. On Barra (which has Catholic roots), pubs, music and other things actually happen on Sundays, as opposed to the more

sober Presbyterian islands to the north – as befits the island where much of *Whisky Galore!* was shot.

ISLAND NIGHTS Northbay House is a 19th-century schoolhouse converted into homely B&B. Doubles from £76. www.barraholidays.co.uk

BEST FOR GINGER BEER

BROWNSEA ISLAND, DORSET

We can't prove this was the inspiration for Kirrin Island in the Famous Five novels, but Enid Blyton did own the golf course overlooking Poole Harbour, and Brownsea sits just inside the harbour's entrance. Here is a place for retro pleasures: jolly picnics, messing about in dinghies (no bikes or dogs allowed, because it's a



Site of Special Scientific Interest), spotting red squirrels and birdwatching on the lagoon. In the 1920s a reclusive owner expelled residents and banned public access for four decades, giving Brownsea its aura of mystery. These days, take the brood to buy second-hand Blyton books at the Engine Shed shop, then to the Villano Café for Purbeck Ice Cream. Or escape via the chain ferry across the harbour mouth for Poole Rock oysters at Shell Bay or a day on Studland beach, staring across to the Old Harry Rocks. ISLAND NIGHTS There are two rental cottages: Custom House sleeps four and practically has water lapping at the front door. Three nights from £308. www. nationaltrust.org.uk/brownsea-island

BEST FOR ALL THE GANG LUNDY DEVON

This 400ft-high chunk of granite in the Bristol Channel is one of the Landmark Trust's longest-serving and most popular getaways. Go by boat (the trusty MS Oldenburg takes two hours) or chopper (15 minutes), and choose from 23 places to stay, which sleep from one to 14 (bookings are already open for 2017). There's also a campsite, which takes up to 40 people. Lundy feels properly remote, despite day visitors, especially when the generators shut down at night, leaving guests to manage with torches (romantics should take candles). While walks, diving and cute little puffins are all very well, one of the chief attractions is still the pub, the Marisco Tavern, which was converted from the old village stores, and which has a payphone (remember those?). There's no mobile signal, landlines, TVs or radios, Bliss. ISLAND NIGHTS Four nights at The Barn from £371. www.landmarktrust.org. uk/lundyisland

BEST FOR HISTORY BUFFS SKELLIG MICHAEL CO KERRY

The force is strong on the rocky outcrop of Skellig Michael, whether you're seeking God (the beehive-shaped cells and oratories were occupied by monks from the 6th to the 12th century) or something more Jedi-like (the island stars in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, out on 17 December, and will return in *Episode VIII*). The Skellig Islands are three rocky outcrops rearing out of the Atlantic eight miles off the coast of Kerry, and deservedly a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You have to work for it, though: the winding path to the top of Skellig Michael is steep and exposed to the elements. The monks must have

been as tough as old sandals. You can smell Little Skellig next door (it has one of Britain's biggest gannet colonies); the sea can be, let's say, lurchy; and you can visit only from May to September. As for staying there, forget it. But five minutes' walk from Bunavalla Pier, the jumping-off point for Skellig boats, the Hare family offers rooms and a studio flat with wonderful views in their salmon-pink house, Iskeroon.

ISLAND NIGHTS Iskeroon, Caherdaniel: suite £70 (minimum three nights); studio from £285 per week, www.iskeroon.com

BEST FOR SILENCE

ISLE OF EIGG HEBRIDES

How cool is Eigg? Not only did the residents pull off a pioneering buyout of their island in 1997, but they have also increased their population and set up Eigg Electric, the world's first stand-alone energy grid powered entirely by wind. waves and sun. It even has its own music label, Lost Map Records, putting out a host of folksy indie bands. The island is one of the four Small Isles, 10 miles off the west coast of Scotland in the turbulent Minch, with a towering lava ridge, breeding populations of eagles and Manx shearwaters, and a 'singing beach' of quartz sand. Artists may be seen at Sweeney's Bothy, an off-grid timber hut designed by artist Alec Finlay and named after a Gaelic hermit king - and watch out for Eigg Box, a creative collective of island artists and writers who maintain a programme of low-key events and projects, sometimes on the beach. ISLAND NIGHTS When there's no artist in residence. Sweeney's Bothy is one of three boltholes offered by Eiggtime. From £65 per night or £400 per week, minimum two nights. www.eiggtime.com

BEST FOR TRADITIONALISTS

HERM CHANNEL ISLANDS

There's nothing quite as intriguing as a hermit. From October to March, Herm's 60 or so islanders keep themselves to themselves, with a reduced boat service and the main White House Hotel closed to visitors (cottages are still available). Even when the hotel does open, time stands still: it has no clocks, let alone TVs or phones, although it does have a mobile signal and Wi-Fi. Herm is old-school: this is where you take your children to scamper up cliff paths and wander along roads untouched by cars (there aren't any) or bicycles (ditto). Traffic is limited to a handful of quad bikes and tractors and in peak season there are eight ferries a day from St Peter Port in

Guernsey. Bar the odd French and Dutch yachtie, you'll feel as if you've stepped off the edge of the world.

ISLAND NIGHTS The White House Hotel: doubles from £204 (dinner, bed and breakfast), www.herm.com/hotel

BEST FOR YOUR POSTURE

CLARE ISLAND CO MAYO

A triumvirate of life's pleasures – yoga, food and horses - are tended to at Macalla Farm on Clare Island, which sits in the mouth of Clew Bay, 25 minutes from the Mayo coast by ferry. The island also has a 12th-century abbey with original wall paintings, cliffs busy with seabirds, and a lighthouse-turned-smart-guesthouse, but this organic farm is the most soothing stay. Owned and run by Ciara and Christophe Mouze (she's originally from the USA; he's from Paris), who live here with their two children, the retreat has a cookery school and a voga studio with views of the pilgrimage mountain of Croagh Patrick. Their sati yoga practice feeds into their mindfulness work with horses; they produce most of their own food using polytunnels, a vegetable garden and sheep, ducks and bees, and energy is largely supplied by solar panels. After all that virtue, head for the Sailor's Bar to listen to locals and 'blow-ins' making music. Open-mic night is every Thursday, if you dare.

ISLAND NIGHTS Macalla Farm: retreats from £320, including food, tuition and ferry, www.macallafarm.ie

BEST FOR TIME-TRAVEL

ST MARY'S ISLES OF SCILLY

Last July, Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall rolled up in St Mary's, the largest of the Isles of Scilly, to sample the first wine made from the first harvest from its first vineyard, Holy Vale, Its owner, Robert Francis, also runs the Star Castle Hotel, housed in a star-shaped former fortress a stroll from the beach. Each morning Tim, captain of the Calypso, turns up at breakfast to tell guests which islands he's going to. There are rooms in the 16th-century garrison fort itself, but the best spot is one of the garden suites, preferably on a sunbed on the terrace with a glass of Holy Vale's Silver Carn Pinot Gris in one hand. **ISLAND NIGHTS Star Castle Hotel:** garden suite from £276 (dinner, bed and breakfast). www.star-castle.co.uk

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THIS MONTH'S AMAZING DEALS FOR SUBSCRIBERS



CHIC CHALETS

Scott Dunn is exclusively offering Condé Nast Traveller readers up to 20% off luxury chalets in Val d'Isere, Courchevel and St Anton until February 2016. Chalets come fully staffed with a private chef and host, and the resort driver service will whisk you to the slopes. Breakfast, afternoon tea, champagne, canapés and gourmet dinners with wine are all included. Book by 31/12/2015. For details, call 0203 582 8269 and quote 'CNT ski offer'. Subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply.



BODY BLITZ

What better way to welcome in the new year than with one of London's fiercest (yet friendliest) fitness trainers? Brit Williams's private and group PT sessions fuse the most effective elements of all exercise disciplines, with an emphasis on high-intensity training that aids fat loss while maintaining and toning lean muscle. This month Brit is offering CNT readers £50 off four PT sessions (now just £300). To book, visit fitbritcollective.com. Valid from 01/12/15 – 26/06/16. Subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply.



SAIL

Immerse yourself in sailing around the Canary Islands aboard the Jean de la Lune. Photograph the wildlife, swim in calm waters, sunbathe on quiet beaches and climb the mast! Weekly adventures are full board, with comfortable cabins and three daily meals from the on-board chef. From £599 including flights. CNT Members Club offer – 20% off all 2016 holidays. Visit sailjdl.co.uk to select your holiday then call 02081441253 or email jdl@sailjdl.com to book, quoting 'CNTMember20'. Subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply.



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ESSENZA HOTEL JERICOACOARA, BRAZIL

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Facing the warm, calm waters of the Ceará coastline beside endless white sand dunes, the magical Essenza Hotel looks out to an unrivalled panorama. Admire kite-surfers in flight, watch the rafts sail by, take in the beautiful sunsets and soak up the natural beauty and energy of Jericoacoara.





CAYO ESPANTO - A PRIVATE ISLAND

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Discover your own private island where paradise and luxury come together at Cayo Espanto; an intimate,

five-star, world-class resort for the discriminating few who demand the best in life. Spend enchanting

evenings and unforgettable days overlooking the Caribbean while staff anticipate your every need.

AMBERGRIS CAYE, BELIZE

KOKKEDAL SLOT COPENHAGEN KOKKEDAL, DENMARK

+45 4422 8000 condenastjohansens.com/kokkedalslot

Kokkedal Castle Copenhagen offers a classic experience with a contemporary twist. Expect Nordic living in a magnificent setting, laid-back rural charm, fun, intimacy and staff whose passion for hospitality is truly inspiring.



KAYUMANIS PRIVATE VILLA & SPA BALI, INDONESIA

+62 361 705 777 condenastjohansens.com/kayumanis

An elegant collection of 23 villas arranged around serene, jade-coloured pools and walkways, where seasoned travellers come to truly get away from everything. Kayumanis is all about personalised service, gracious hospitality and back-to-nature luxury in a forest setting near the Ayung River and culturally-rich village of Ubud.



HOTEL CAN SIMONETA MALLORCA, BALEARIC ISLANDS

+34 971 81 61 10 condenastjohansens.com/simoneta

A five-star hotel located on Mallorca's north-east coast, Hotel Can Simoneta's 140-year-old buildings have been beautifully transformed into 28 guest rooms full of elegance. The restaurant has breathtaking views, treatments are available at the spa and wellness area, and direct access to the sea is reached via private steps carved into the cliff.

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TORTUGA BAY, PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB Punta cana, dominican republic

+1 809 959 8229

condenastjohansens.com/puntacana

This award-winning boutique hotel offers understated elegance, privacy and unparalleled personal service. Located in a private enclave, Tortuga Bay comprises 13 luxurious beachfront villas designed by the late, great, fashion designer Oscar de la Renta.





THE ALBATROZ HOTEL CASCAIS, PORTUGAL

+351 21 484 73 80

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A touch of glamour presiding over the ocean, only 20 minutes from Lisbon city centre, The Albatroz Hotel combines intuitive service with superb amenities.

These include a sea-facing pool, sunbathing terrace, panoramic bar overlooking the bay and gastronomic restaurant. Feel rested, refreshed and reinvigorated.



HIDEAWAY BEACH RESORT & SPA MALDIVES DHONAKULHI ISLAND, MALDIVES

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A private all-suite resort with some of the largest beachfront villas in the Maldives, Hideaway Beach is famous for its incredible double coral reef and long stretches of white sand beaches. Four restaurants, a spa and the country's only beach club make this a true paradise.



GRAN HOTEL ATLANTIS BAHÍA REAL FUERTEVENTURA, CANARY ISLANDS

+34928537153

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Have you ever enjoyed a special moment that you wanted to last forever? Stay at the beachside Gran Hotel Atlantis Bahía Real where time slows down and the unique experiences are unforgettable.

TRAVELLER ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE



PORTALS HILLS BOUTIOUE HOTEL MALLORCA, BALEARIC ISLANDS

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Offering a luxurious Migmi feel with a Mediterranean breeze. Portals Hills was created for sophisticated jetsetters, gourmets, connoisseurs and lovers of design and architecture. A brand new boutique hotel in the southwest of Mallorca, it offers 29 suites and two Fendi-furnished penthouses. (Subject to availability. Valid for Deluxe Rooms only.)



LUNA2 PRIVATE HOTEL BALI. INDONESIA

+62 361 730 402

condenastjohansens.com/luna2

This five-bedroom property extends far beyond a traditional villa experience by way of its prime beachfront location, visionary ultra-modern design by Luna2 founder and designer Melanie Hall, and superstar services provided by no less than 20 staff who cater to guests' every whim.



SKYLOFTS AT MGM GRAND LAS VEGAS, USA

+1 702 891 6098

condenastjohansens.com/skylofts

Offering an extravagance to make even Vegas regulars blush, SKYLOFTS is perched high atop MGM Grand and delivers sweeping city views, decadent amenities and impeccable service that will leave you wanting nothing more than an extended stay.



COWORTH PARK BERKSHIRE, ENGLAND

01344 630540

condenastjohansens.com/coworthpark

This is Dorchester Collection's luxury country house hotel and spa with sumptuous rooms and suites, exquisite restaurants and a luxury spa with indoor pool and treatments to relax and invigorate. Sunday to Friday leisure breaks start from £320 prpn B&B plus a bottle of Champagne. See the website for special packages.



OLIMAGIÒ TUSCANY, ITALY

+39 0584 768118

condenastjohansens.com/olimagio

Olimagiò is a place to regenerate the mind, body and soul. Surrounded by the Alps, set among olive trees and close to the sea, this is the perfect destination for peaceful yoga or an active trek in the Alps. Enjoy homegrown produce, local cuisine, cookery courses and more.



THE BAKER HOUSE 1650 NEW YORK/LONG ISLAND, USA

+1 631 324 4081 condenastjohansens.com/bakerhouse

Regarded as the most exclusive bed and breakfast in the Hamptons, The Baker House 1650 has large, beautifully furnished bedrooms with wood-burning fireplaces and state-of-the-art amenities. The blissfully inviting Baker Spa makes it a purely indulgent retreat.



LAURA ASHLEY THE BELSFIELD **CUMBRIA, ENGLAND**

01539 44 2448

conden a stjohan sens. com/bels field

Set in six acres of landscaped gardens this boutique hotel offers unparalleled views over Lake Windermere. There are 62 designer bedrooms, including 25 Lake View bedrooms, two Four-Poster bedrooms and suites all enjoying amazing views.



RESERVA CONCHAL BEACH RESORT, GOLF & SPA, PLAYA CONCHAL, COSTA RICA

+506 26543000

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Unforgettable family memories await at Reserva Conchal where luxury and hospitality are enhanced by Costa Rican flair. Enjoy the exclusive beachfront club or championship golf course and two-for-one executive massage in the spa, plus alfresco breakfast beside the pool.



HOTEL TANNENHOF ST ANTON AM ARLBERG, AUSTRIA

+43 5446 30311 condenastjohansens.com/hoteltannenhof

This is your private winter heaven at 1,350 metres above sea level with views of the valley towards the slopes of St Anton am Arlberg. The small boutique hotel, with just seven luxurious suites, has been lovingly and elegantly furnished to provide optimum comfort for your wellbeing.



LA MAISON D'AIX AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE

condenastjohansens.com/lamaisondaix

La Maison d'Aix isn't just a hotel, it's a living, breathing piece of history with a heart and soul. Further to a three-year renovation, this hidden gem is a yesteryear escape from the hustle and bustle. Features include Jerusalem stone cladding, 300-year-old teak parquet flooring and superb contemporary furniture.



HOTEL MUSE BANGKOK BANGKOK, THAILAND

+662 630 4000

condenastjohansens.com/hotelmuse

Make some lasting memories at Hotel Muse Bangkok and indulge in the hotel's vintage cocktail collection. Old favourites include 'Aviator' and 'Old Fashioned' served under Bangkok's starry skies at The Speakeasy — Hotel Muse's incredible rooftop bar with views of the Bangkok skyline.



SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, PARIS PASSY, FRANCE

+33 1 53 67 19 64

condenastjohansens.com/slpr

Located in the heart of the 16th arrondissement of Paris, facing the Eiffel Tower and River Seine, Shangri-La Hotel, Paris has 101 rooms and suites, three restaurants — two of which are Michelin-starred — one bar and four historical reception rooms.



SACRED HOUSE CAPPADOCIA - ÜRGÜP, TURKEY

condenastjohansens.com/sacredhouse

Sacred House resides in the heart of one of the world's most exclusive spots in Ürgüp, Turkey. The embodiment of history, culture and Greek mythology, this unique boutique hotel unites the heritage of the region with today's contemporary lifestyle.



THE ARCH LONDON LONDON. ENGLAND

020 7724 4700

condenastjohansens.com/thearchlondon

The Arch London is a shopaholic's paradise, located minutes from Oxford Street in a luxurious Georgian townhouse hideaway in the heart of central London. Save 20% on its luxurious suites by quoting 'CNJ20' upon booking via The Arch website or the reservation team.



STORFJORD HOTEL SKODJE, NORWAY

+47 70 27 49 22 condenastjohansens.com/storfjordhotel

A secluded luxury boutique hotel on a hillside overlooking the Storfjord and Sunnmøre Alps, this is one of Norway's finest retreats. Behind its log walls awaits an experience you'll not find anywhere else: a beautiful haven of tranquillity and relaxation away from hectic life.



LAURA ASHLEY THE MANOR ELSTREE HERTFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND

020 8953 8227

conden ast johansens. com/laura ashle yelstree

Set in 10 acres with views overlooking the Hertfordshire countryside and central London, The Manor Elstree is an ideal retreat to get away from it all with good rail and road links to the capital. The hotel comprises 49 luxury rooms, an AA Rosette-awarded restaurant, bar and meeting and banqueting facilities.



GILPIN HOTEL & LAKE HOUSE CUMBRIA. ENGLAND

01539488818

condenastjohansens.com/thegilpin

Winter is a magical time at the Lake District's Gilpin Hotel & Lake House with log-burning fires and views looking out to snow-capped mountains, frozen lakes and waterfalls. Gilpin is a small, family-run Relais & Châteaux hotel that strives to be the best with a friendly, personal touch. Rates start from £148 pppn.



SHANGRI-LA BOSPHORUS, ISTANBUL BEŞIKTAŞ, TURKEY

+90 212 275 8888

condenastjohansens.com/slib

This unique hotel blends Asian philosophies with Turkish hospitality. Take in the breathtaking views of the Bosphorus, stay in one of the 186 spacious, luxurious quest rooms, enjoy the central location and experience authentic Chinese culinary experience at Shang Palace.

TRAVELLER ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE



BUONANOTTE GARIBALDI ROME, ITALY

+39 06 58 330 733

condenastjohansens.com/garibaldi

Situated in Rome's medieval quarter of Trastevere, Buonanotte Garibaldi's patio has a distinctly Mediterranean ambience. Each of the three guest rooms is en suite with comfortable beds draped in beautiful hand-painted textiles.



INIALA BEACH HOUSE PHANG-NGA, THAILAND

+66 7 6451 456

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Iniala is extraordinarily design-focused and comprises 10 suites in three beachfront villas, a penthouse, three spas, a kid's hotel and Aziamendi restaurant headed by three Michelin-starred chef Eneko Atxa. Perfectly placed on Natai beach 20 minutes from Phuket Airport.



CASA PESTAGUA CARTAGENA DE INDIAS, COLOMBIA

+575 664 9510

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Discover the enchanting beauty of our 17th-century aristocratic colonial palace where each one of the 11 luxury rooms offers the intimacy of a luxury residence with the personal service of a five-star hotel. Centrally located, Casa Pestagua has a spa, pool, gardens, restaurant and roof-top terrace with Jacuzzi plus views of the sea and city.



PRAIA ART RESORT CALABRIA, ITALY

+39 0962 1902890

condenastjohansens.com/praiaartresort

A corner of heaven, Praia Art Resort provides the rare chance to really relax. Comprising 10 rooms, this intimate boutique hotel resides beside the sandy beaches and crystal-clear waters of a protected marine reserve offering authentic Calabrian hospitality, understated elegance, privacy and exquisite local food.



SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, TORONTO ONTARIO, CANADA

+1 647 788 8888

condenastjohansens.com/slto

An urban oasis in the downtown core, the five-star Shangri-La Hotel, Toronto spans across 17 floors of a 66-storey tower alongside the historic Bishop's Block. Spacious rooms are drenched in light with spectacular cityscape views and feature natural furnishings, dark wood and plush leather sofas. Enjoy fine dining and a visit to the Miraj Hammam Spa and Health Club.



VILLA MARÍA CRISTINA **GUANAJUATO. MEXICO**

+52 473 731 2182

condenastjohansens.com/villamariacristina

Located in one of Mexico's most picturesque cities, this peaceful small boutique hotel has 13 spacious suites decorated with French furniture that wonderfully complement its architectural style, wooden flooring, marble bathrooms and large windows.



EL CONVENTO BOUTIQUE HOTEL LA ANTIGUA GUATEMALA, GUATEMALA

+502 7720 7272 condenastjohansens.com/elconventoantigua

Providing stunning elegance and unparalleled comfort, El Convento Boutique Hotel comprises 26 lovingly-appointed suites decorated in relaxing neutral tones with displays of fine art, sculptures and unique Guatemalan textiles. Quote 'TAC' to save 10% on dinner taken on the sunset terrace.



SOPWELL HOUSE HERTFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND

01727 864477 condenastjohansens.com/sopwellhouse

A luxurious hideaway five minutes from the charming city of St Albans, Sopwell House is a historic country house dating back to 1603 set within 12 acres of Hertfordshire countryside. Features include complimentary Wi-Fi and Sky HD with Sky Sports package.



KEEMALA PHUKET, THAILAND

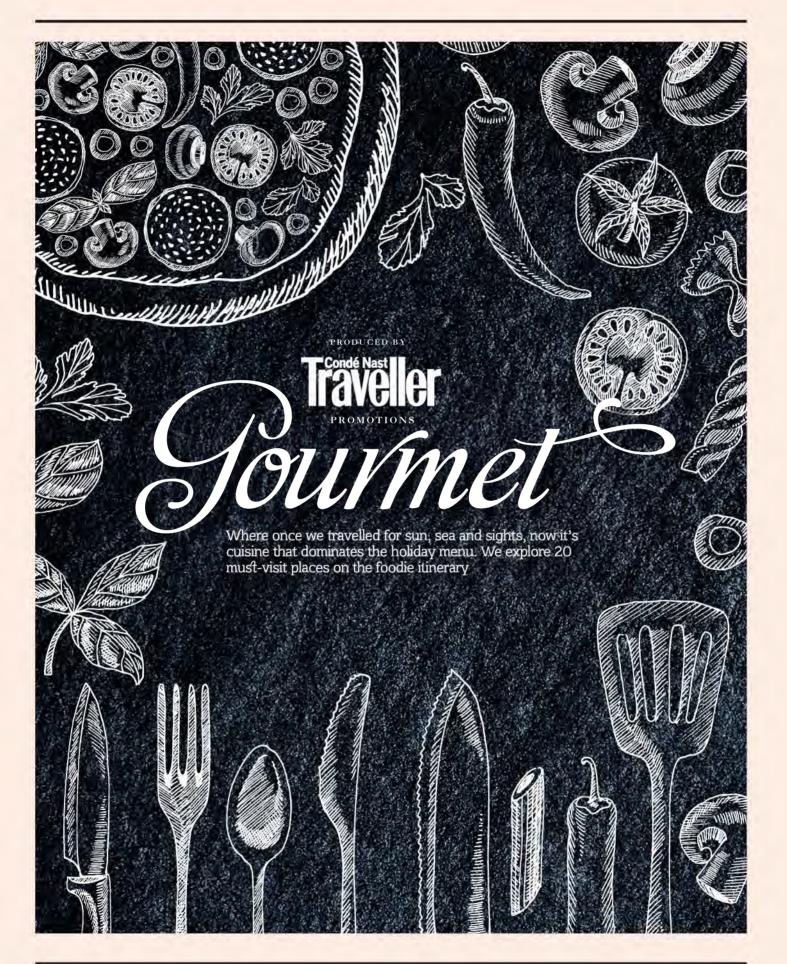
+66 76 358 777 condenastjohansens.com/keemala

Keemala is an enchanting all-pool villa set in the tropical woodlands of Kamala, Phuket. Choose from four villa designs and enjoy the holistic spa and retreats, indulgent and healthy cuisine, enriching activities and the truly spectacular Thai setting. Exclusive reader offer: complimentary 90-minute treatment per guest.*



ANGELS TEARS VODKA

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Good taste

From sizzling street food to Michelin-starred restaurants, the gourmet world traveller is spoilt for choice. Local ingredients are making a big impact all over while fine dining expands its reaches. Find your foodie paradise right here...



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: VINEYARD CYCLING IN NELSON, SOUTH ISLAND; MARTINBOROUGH WINE FESTIVAL; ROMANOS RESORT, COSTA NAVARINO

1. New tealand

There was a time when, in the UK, New Zealand's food scene extended no further than the lamb that was trumpeted on our high streets. Thankfully for British tourists and farmers alike, the country has since expanded to offer a whole lot more, and all easy to explore. Operators such as Turquoise Holidays run tours through the pretty vineyards of Martinborough before refuelling in the bite-size harbour capital of Wellington - brimning with cafés and culture, en route to the majestic South Island. There you'll find Nelson, an unfeasibly picturesque enclave on the northwest coastline



whose mix of vineyards, breweries, dairies and honey farms, all set agains't a stunningly beautiful backdrop, is typical of an intimate country where you'll scon be living like a local. turquoiseholidays.co.uk

2. Greece

There's something raw and authentic about Greek cuisine – whether it's the traditional cooking and pastoral landscape of Crete or the volcanic soils and vibrant tastes of Santorini







– its flavours as layered as the blue and whites of the island's classic vista. Various small-scale fcodie holidays are available that bring this charm to life, but for those seeking a grander scale, try the two-hotel resort of Costa Navarino in the Peloponnese. Set among acres of orchards facing the Ionian Sea in a sustainable environment (the brand produces its own range of products) the resort offers hands-on fun via olive harvests and cookery classes. visitgreece.gr

3. Brooklyn

The evolution of Brooklyn's food scene over the past decade has been nothing short of staggering – its edgy, alternative, hipsfer eateries now rivalling Manhattan for mainsfream appeal. What started as a street food movement has grown to incorporate all manner of independent, artisan businesses – from the chef's table at three-Michelin-starred seafood specialist (and neighbourhood grocer)



Brooklyn Fare – to the corrugated iron and breezeblock industrial chic of Roberta's bakery and pizzeria. Much of the growth taps into Brooklyn's historic brewing scene, which Brooklyn Brewery revived in 1988. Now part of a vibrant independent food and drink scene in its home town of Williamsburg, it offers tours, tastings and a lively bar in the very spot where the beer is made.

4. San Sebastian

As a gourmet destination, San Sebastián needs little introduction. Packed with more Michelin stars per capita than any city on earth, the likes of Mugaritz and Arzak have stamped its place on the foodie map. But there is more to this supremely situated Spanish coastal spot than high-end dining. At the other end of the scale,

the Basque equivalent of tapas, known as pintxos, are spearheading a form of counter culture. These little morsels, often based around the abundant local seafcod and delivered on a cocktail stick, are served at almost every bar and are fast becoming an art form. These days, a bar crawl makes for a very fine dinner, sansebastiantourism.info

5. Champagne and Enghnoly

The most famous names of Champagne have transcended wine to become symbols of celebration and luxury in their own right. Now, with the region's vineyards, houses and cellars having been awarded UNESCO world heritage status, there's another reason to pay a visit. Driving through the vineyards whose grapes go into Laurent-Perrier et al will lend further resonance the next time you pop a cork. Continue



an hour further south and you'll find two more new UNESCO wine sites. Burgundy's Côte de Nuits and Côte de Beaune represent the heart of the region's wine production, while the city of Dijon and the surrounding area is home to a rich, rural cuisine that epitomises hearty fare. en.unesco.org

6. Portland

If Brooklyn is where it's at for east coast foodies, Portland is undoubtedly America's west coast gourmet star. Artisan brewers, characterful coffee shops and vibrant food trucks are just part of a food scene that is as hip as the city itself. Take Ox, a noreservations restaurant with a custommade wood-fired grill where they know every detail about the meat they cook - from the name of the beast to the field it grazed in. Or the farmers' market which for once lives up to the name, local producers coming in to sell - and discuss - everything from squash to yak meat. Or the urban breweries and wineries turning out quality draft beer and pinot noir alike. Go in September for the annual Feast event, a gourmet mash-up of tastings, demos, chefs, dinners, and classes.

feastportland.com



TAKE OX, A NO-RESERVATIONS
RESTAURANT WHERE THEY KNOW
EVERY DETAIL ABOUT THE MEAT
THEY COOK – FROM THE NAME OF
THE BEAST TO THE FIELD IT GRAZED IN



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:

HANOKE GINYU, JAPAN; PRAWN VOL

AU-VENTS

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE FESTIVAI

FOOD, KASHIWA

STREET FOOD,

KYOTO

MACAU. CENTRE

KINKAKU-JI TEMPLE,

Mochi; Pasteis de Nata, Macau; Taipa





7. Malaysia

There are so many cultural influences in Malaysia that for once the 'melting pot' cliché really does hold true – particularly for food lovers. Taking in the tea plantations of the Cameron Highlands, the vibrant street food and fragrant spice gardens of Penang and the beguiling night markets of Kuala Lumpur will feel like a global tour, with echoes of India, Thailand, China and Portugal all fused into one. Get out into the wilds of Sabah and Sarawak and you'll discover a whole new array of ethnic dishes. tourism.gov.my

8. Macan

Only an hour from Hong Kong by ferry, in terms of look and feel, Macau is a world away; its peaceful gardens and hillsides providing a restful escape from the hustle and bustle over the water. There's still plenty of activity on the city streets here though, and much of it revolves around food. Beyond its signature Portuguese and Cantonese fusion - think pork chop buns followed by egg tart - influences here draw from Brazilian, Indian, Malaysian and African cultures. Nowhere is this more vividly seen than in the St Dominic Market, a three-floor maze of fresh produce, much of which is immediately rendered in the stir-fry specialties of the street stalls outside. macautourism.gov.mo

9. Japan

It's an oft-repeated fact that Tokyo has more Michelin stars than any other city. Less well known is the diversity and quality found in the rest of the country, which extends way



beyond sushi and sashimi. So while the fish markets are legendary for their huge scale and frantic activity, even department stores make a theatre of their food offering. Then there's the izakaya and tachinomiya - buzzy, casual, pub-like spots to grab authentic small plates, all washed down with plenty of sake. With such a huge amount to cover, it's worth considering an itinerised trip - Scott Dunn offers a sevennight gastronomic tour taking in the world's largest fresh fish market, sushi making in Tokyo, the art of the tea ceremony in Kyoto, creating your own 'Wagashi' (Japanese sweets) and learning about the local produce and cooking techniques of Hakone. seejapan.co.uk scottdunn.com

10. Philippines
In Manila, it's all about the street

In Manila, it's all about the street fcod, which is more revered by locals than the dishes at any fine dining establishment. From the deep-fried, caramelised banana 'saba' to the deep-fried, orange-battered quail egg 'kwek kwek' and the – yes, you've got it – deep-fried fishballs

in sweet or spicy sauce, these are not, perhaps, snacks for the health-conscious. Or, indeed, the squirmish – chicken feet and chicken intestines are other delicacies. For a more classic rendition, try the national dish, adobong baboy, a slow-cooked layer of pork seasoned with sea salt, coconut, peppercorn and bay leaves. Delicious. itsmorefuninthephilippines.com





WHILE THE FISH MARKETS ARE LEGENDARY FOR THEIR HUGE SCALE AND FRANTIC ACTIVITY, EVEN DEPARTMENT STORES MAKE A THEATRE OF THEIR FOOD OFFERING



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11. Truscany and Piedmont

No gourmet traveller's itinerary is complete without taking in Italy in some shape or form – though it can be tough deciding which. Both Tuscany and Piedmont are hard to beat, and not just for their dreamy, greencontoured patchwork landscape. Not only do they offer some of the

country's finest wines (Chianti, Brunello, Barolo and Barbaresco) but there is also the lure of one of the most prized finds – truffles. Go in the autumn and you'll be able to join truffle hunts in both regions, with particularly enticing packages run by pristine properties Il Borro (owned by the Ferragamo family) in Tuscany and Hotel Principe di Savoia (part of the Dorchester Collection) in Milan. ilborro.it

dorchestercollection.com

12. Abn Dhabi

The UAE capital's ambitions to establish itself as a global destination for fine dining were given a boost in October when two-Michelin-star chef Michael Caines opened his first restaurant outside the UK. Pearls by Michael Caines is a casual dining concept, with a menu inspired by the Arabian Gulf, fusing locally grown Emirate ingredients with a European style of cooking. Looking out onto the surrounding water and islets, the restaurant makes quite a statement

before any food is served – not least with its own landing jetty. visitabudhabi.ae; jumeirah.com

13. Ireland

Irish hospitality has always been renowned, but the food didn't always match up. Not any more – from the Galway Oyster & Seafood Festival (which these days extends way beyond oyster, and indeed seafcod, to take in parades, balls and all-round merriment) to the wealth of residential cookery courses (none better than that of legendary Ballymaloe, with its 100-acre organic farm), the Emerald Isle is living up to its green moniker. County Cork, where Ballymaloe is based, is





With a culinary offering on a par with the finest establishments in the world, the Grand Velas Riviera Maya is a gourmand's dream destination. And that is before you realise it is all-inclusive...



urrounded by lush Yucatan jungle and fringed by the Caribbean Sea, the magnificent fivestar Grand Velas Riviera Maya serves up a whole new take on the concept of 'allinclusive'. Chic, spacious interiors encompass three distinctively styled areas - Grand Class, Ambassador and Zen - each with its own pool. Ensuring the ultimate in relaxation, the award-winning spa offers holistic Mayan-inspired treatments. And then there are the resort's culinary offerings: think a level of flavour, creativity and presentation comparable to the world's very finest restaurants. Indeed, the Executive Chef, Maître Cuisinier de France Michel Mustiere, is one of only 300 chefs worldwide to attain the prestigious Master Chef title. At Grand Velas Riviera Maya, all-inclusive means you can dine like a holiday diva every night of the week.

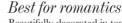
Best for gourmands

The first all-inclusive resort restaurant to receive a Five Diamonds AAA award (equivalent to three Michelin stars), Cocina de Autor is the creation of three internationally acclaimed chefs, who between them own two of Restaurant Magazine's '100 best restaurants in the world', and an award for 'Best Chef in Mexico'. Such is its reputation, locals come from across the region to enjoy its contemporary and creative Spanish, Basque and Mexican cuisine: resort guests can savour its delights at no extra charge as many times as they wish.

Best for local fare

Boasting its own Four Diamonds AAA award, Frida is headed by Chef Ricardo de la Vega. Born in Mexico City, he has worked for top hotels and restaurants across Mexico and has a deep understanding of the regional delicacies that make up Mexican food from states including Puebla, Oaxaca, the Yucatan and Quintana Roo. The result: contemporary Mexican cuisine created without compromising its traditional essence.

Clockwise from top: Suite at Grand Velas Riviera Maya; Kobe beef at Cocina de Autor; Interior, Cocina de Autor; Locals come from across the region to Cocina de Autor



Beautifully decorated in tones of red and black, Piaf's evocative space transports you to the Parisian luxury of the 1940s. Stunning curtains of Swarovski crystals and designer lighting create an atmosphere of fine extravagance; live music imbues its own romanticism, while the French cuisine, awarded Four Diamonds by AAA, provides the final sensory flourish.

Best for a taste of the exotic

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duck in ten spices, and angus beef scallops with
lightly spiced peanut sauce – bring the region's rich,
traditional flavours alive, to a backdrop of
traditional music

For more information or reservations, please visit www.rivieramaya.grandvelas.com







a particular haven, with the plentiful bisfro and restaurant offerings of Kinsale a standout draw. gcodfcodireland.ie

14. Mexico

Until you've had a proper margarita and a proper taco, you've not really experienced Mexican food. It's not just margaritas that provide that sweet but tangy hit though - for the ultimate refreshment, head for the hawkers in Mexico City who sell any fruit you care to name (watermelon is a particular favourite) coated in salt, chilli and lime. The quality - and variety - of produce on display at Oaxaca's food markets makes for an even more vibrant assault on the senses, while a taco crawl will shine a whole new light on the national specialty. If you need to relax a little after all that, Velas Resorts' four coastal properties do exceptional local dining in more tranquil surroundings. visitmexico.com; velasresorts.com

15. Baugleol.
The popular vision of Bangkok is one of eclectic, chaotic street food

stalls - and it's true that these offer an enticing array of ever-more exciting dishes. But to suggest that the city's food scene is characterised by this somewhat raw approach is to do a disservice to its increasingly sophisticated bars, hotels and restaurants. Metropolitan by COMO is home to David Thompson's long renowned Nahm restaurant (voted Asia's best), Eat Me is a vibrant Aussie take on Thai-Asian fusion cuisine, with an equally buzzing bar, while Namsaah Bottling Trust's small plate food and supremely sourced and cleverly created cocktails reflect the city's ever-more funky bar scene. uk.tourismthailand.org

16. Qatar

Gordon Ramsay, Alain Ducasse and Jean-Georges Vongerichten are just three of the top chefs to have established a presence in Doha – where the Qatari restaurant scene is growing at the same rate as everything else this tiny gulf state touches. And it's not only western exports that are leading the charge. Local dishes take in everything from



HEAD FOR THE HAWKERS IN MEXICO CITY WHO SELL ANY FRUIT YOU CARE TO NAME (WATERMELON IS A PARTICULAR FAVOURITE) COATED IN SALT, CHILLI AND LIME

the traditional harira soup to camel burgers. The Souq Waqif Boutique Hotels in the Souk serve a fine blend of Arabic and world cuisine: seek out the Al Shurfa Arabic Lounge and the Al Matbakh Rooftop Grill. swbh.com



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: NAHM AT METROPOLITAN BY COMO, BANGKOK; 'PLATILLO,' VELAS RESORT, MEXICO; AL MATBAKH, ROOFTOP GRILL SOUQ WAQIF BOUTIQUE HOTELS, QATAR; COWS RETURNING HOME, BALLYVOLARE HOUSE, CORK



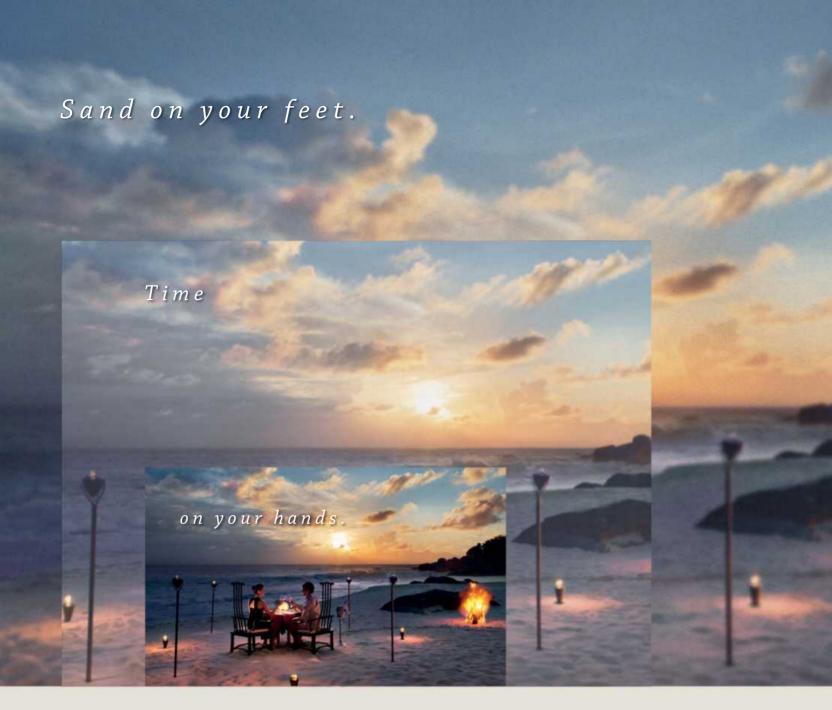


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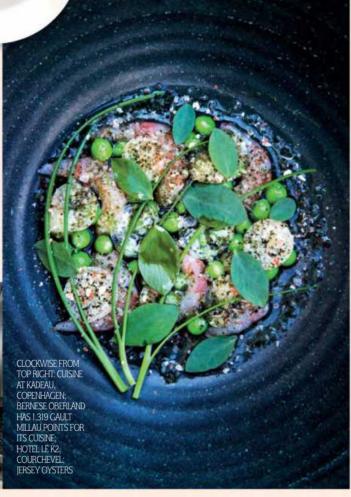


17. Channel Islands

A culture of self sufficiency and a continental approach to dining has made the Channel Islands one of the great food destinations of the British Isles. From mushrooms to scallops, cheese to pork, an astonishing amount of produce here is locally grown, caught, raised or foraged. Its status as a haven for City types has also led to the emergence of a stellar restaurant scene – those indulging in a spot of island hopping will be spoilt for choice, with Longueville Manor and Ormer on Jersey, La Sablonnerie







on Sark and The Old Government House Hotel & Spa on Guernsey leading the way. visitchannelislands.com

18. Slope food

Time was when eating on skiing holidays meant grabbing an overpriced (and undercooked) bratwurst up the mountain, and a one-size-fits all fondue on the way back down. These days the competition for the title of top food resort is as hot as the competition on the slopes, with the likes of Marcus Wareing, Sat Bains and Heston Blumenthal setting up camp on the slopes of Courmayeur for the four-day Mountain Gourmet Ski Experience, while the St Mauritz

Gourmet Festival brings a more international flavour (2016 sees a Japanese takeover). For year round excellence, though, Courchevel is hard to beat – from the cosy ambience and generous portions of Bel Air to the two-Michelin starred K2 and La Table du Kilimandjaro of the K Collection.

Noma, the place that made foraging cool, is back on top of the World's 50 Best Restaurants list, but good

ccol, is back on top of the World's 50 Best Restaurants list, but gcod luck if you're one of the 20,000 a month applying for a table. Luckily, it's not the only reason to visit the charming patchwork of islands and village-like neighbourhoods



that make up the Danish capital, with a host of exciting, creative spots having tapped into the self-sufficient foodie vibe. Coffee nuts will love the devotion to the bean on show at Coffee Collective; Ved Stranden 10 is a seriously cool wine bar; but it is restaurants such as Amass (accessed by boat) and

Kadeau, on the foodie-haven island of Bornholm, that truly shine, via the susfainable, organic approach that puts locally sourced product (from cranberries to herring) to the fore. visitcopenhagen.com

20. Bernese Oberland

Smart fine-dining is legendary here. Michelin-starred restaurants in Gstaad include brasserie-style Leonard's, the elegant Chesery (under chef Robert Speth) and sophisticated Sommet with over 400 rare vintage wines. Hearty local cuisine takes inspiration from Alpine pastures and those belltinkling herds. Cheese fiends should see Bernese Oberland speciality Hobelkäse being made most mornings at local dairies or pile in to traditional-style lodges for a taster of the region's rustic raclette, stübli. Summer sees the annual Davidoff-Saveurs Gourmet Festival wowing visitors with lavish outdoor banquets from world-renowned chefs and award-winning locals. Unmissable. myswitzerland.com

TIME WAS WHEN EATING ON SKIING HOLIDAYS MEANT GRABBING AN OVERPRICED BRATWURST UP THE MOUNTAIN, AND A ONE-SIZE-FITS ALL FONDUE ON THE WAY BACK DOWN



In an old Dutch colonial town in the heart of Galle in Sri Lanka, amidst all that's beautiful, lies Jetwing Lighthouse. In this resplendent resort, with its sweeping corridors and towering palms, food takes centre stage. Infused with local, Asian and European flavours, taste buds will revel in a certain je ne sais quoi. Five restaurants of varying cuisines will leave you spoilt for choice. Nihal's Restaurant, run by well-known Chef Nihal himself, specialises in an array of fine seafood dishes. What's more, this is the only hotel in Sri Lanka that has won a "Wine Spectator" award, making it the perfect place for a luxurious meal with a fine wine or two. For reservations, please call +94 112 345 720 or email resv.lighthouse@jetwinghotels.com







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by Puck's signature dishes from CUT, Spago and his Asian-

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MAYFAIR MEET UP

Looking for a new brunch spot? The May Fair Bar on London's Berkeley Street has undergone a transformation and now offers a brunch menu (available I I am-4pm) which includes an indulgent Mayfair take on breakfast classics like warm brioche cinnamon French toast with salted caramel sauce. Yum!

themayfairbar.co.uk



Inspired by an irreverent punk rock attitude, WATERFORD's Rebel Collection includes giftware, travel accessories and jewellery and is the latest collaboration between the luxury crystal house and leading British designer Jo Sampson.

waterford.co.uk



When it comes to ageing, the décolleté can often be ahead of the face so I recommend LANCER's new Contour Décolleté – an innovative firming concentrate which is quickly absorbed into the skin, plumping and smoothing away surface dehydration and softening the appearance of crepiness. With continual use you'll see an incremental improvement. It's particularly good post-flight to stave off dehydration. £150,



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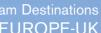
Will.i.am and The Coca-Cola Company have brought luxury sustainable fashion and design range **EKOCYCLE** to the UK. Among their collaborations is one with Globe-Trotter and the results are inevitably stylish and environmentally friendly.

From £70, harrods.com

The Jamesse Prestige Collection has been created by LOUIS ROEDERER in partnership with Philippe Jamesse, chef sommelier at Domaine Les Crayères in Reims. It is available in this Louis Roederer Brut Premier Prestige Gift Box with two beautiful champagne flutes. £62.99, harveynichols.com



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7. PAD LIFESTYLE is an online lifestyle collective offering many unique and inspiring home and fashion brands from across the world. With so many chic, curious and eclectic pieces to find – such as this gorgeous 100% Harris Tweed cape in 'Sienna Mix' by Cocoon Luxury Wear – it's definitely worth a look. Visit www.padlifestyle.com

8. Say it with Bacon. CURE & SIMPLE deliver premium bacon straight to your door – first class post. Their all natural, hand cured, air dried bacon is made from British pigs raised in Suffolk's countryside and available in a range of mouth-watering flavours created by a Michelin rated chef, offered via a subscription service or as a personalised gift – bacon for every occasion! Superior bacon £5.95 200gms by Cure & Simple. Email hello@cureandsimple.com or visit www.cureandsimple.com
9. Wear your favorite travel memories with custom jewelry handmade with beach sand from DUNE JEWELRY, the Original Beach Sand Jewelry Company®. Capturing memories from where you've been, where you love and where you're going, Dune's Sandbank™ offers thousands of sands and locations worldwide. There is something for all travel lovers, men and women alike, in the Dune Collection. Visit www.dune/gewelry.com for more information.

10. THE BIG CHEESE MAKING KIT offers the perfect gift for the foodie in your life. Beautifully designed and simple to use. Buy The Ultimate Cheese Making Kit for just £36

at www.bigcheesemakingkit.com

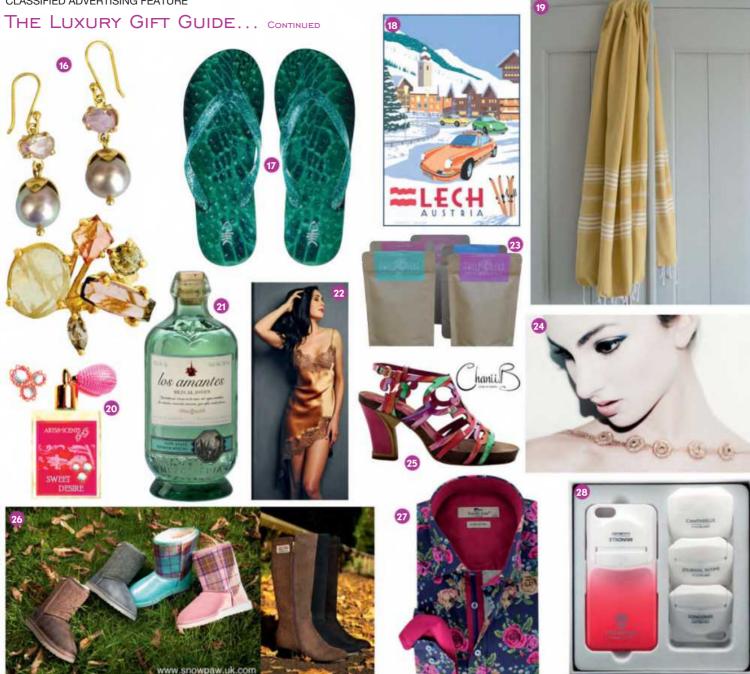
11. COMFY CLOGS. Swedish samibracelets have finally arrived in London! The incredibly popular bracelets you can see on many stars today, are made of reindeer leather with silver and pewter thread with an antler button. Sizes for children, women and men. Visit www.comfyclogs.net or call Cecilia on 07815 750340 or 020 8780 9767 to find out more. 12. L'ETOILE SPORT is a New York City based brand that designs sportswear for the stylish, classy woman. Their philosophy is play all day, combining function and high end fashion. To

tiew their full collection visit www.letoilesport.com

13. CHEEKY MONKEY TREEHOUSES specialise in the design and build of bespoke tree houses to complement your garden perfectly. They can also undertake European and worldwide commissions. Visit www.cheekymonkeytreehouses.com or call 01403 732452 for more information.

14. The Acrux Rhodium single Ear-cuff is for the girl who does not like to wear earrings, or can never find her 'other' earring. No piercings are needed for this sculptural hoop; it simply hugs your ear. Opt for this sci-fi piece for an asymmetric playful look. HOOKED | HKD contemporary jewelry has a penchant for single earrings. Check out their universe on www.h-k-d.net and @hkd_line

15. LATHAM & NEVE – known for their stunning contemporary hand–made British jewellery since 1997. Featured is the unique Ripple Bangle in beaten silver and 18ct gold, £212 Ballroom bangles, everyday earrings, ravishing rings, and much much more... Buy online/stockists/brochure, visit www.lathamandneve.co.uk



16. The ALYS JORNS Fine Jewelry line is for individuals who appreciate stunning natural gemstones, fine craftsmanship, and thoughtfully sourced materials. Designed with an eye for ease, simplicity and beauty, each one of a kind piece is expertly crafted by a master goldsmith. Featured are the Ula Drop Earrings, \$1685 USD and the Aaliyah Ring, \$3325 USD.

17. The humble flipflop has made way for FLOPZ; beautifully colourful flip flops with a unique massaging sensation. Massaging gel promises to keep hot holiday feet happy, whilst the hardwearing design and protective bag will help keep your pair in good nick from the beach to the spa, and back again. Featured are the Emerald Flip Flops, £35. Browse the vibrant range at flopz.com

18. PULLMAN EDITIONS designs, commissions and publishes striking original posters which capture the enduring appeal of Art Deco. Their newly-commissioned posters feature winter sports, glamorous resorts around the world, and the world's greatest historic automobiles. All £395 each. Call 020 7730 0547 or view and buy online at www.pullmaneditions.com

19. Large yet lightweight, these beautifully striped and stylish OTTOMANIA hammam towels dry quickly and are easy to fold, making them perfect to pack in any bag or suitcase. Whether you are at the beach, swimming pool, sports club or on a boat, make sure you take one with you. Plus, they are very suitable for daily use in your bathroom at home. The perfect gift. For more information, see www.ottomania.nl or call +31 237370426. Also wholesale.

20. ARTS & SCENTS is a new and exciting German company creating unique perfumes. Unusual combinations of rare natural materials and fragrance oils result in astonishing effects in every scent composition that they offer. Arts & Scents produce their perfumes in the traditional European perfumers method, which enables them to create truly outstanding scent bases. The use of special plant material, melted with emergent fragrance compounds, built the heart of their perfumes. Visit www.artsandscents.com to view their collections.

21. LOS AMANTES' is a smooth smoky and sexy hand crafted mezcal with citrus and cucumber notes from Oaxaca Mexico. It is currently a favourite in the US, Mexico, Australia and will

be coming soon to the UK. Visit www.losamantes.com

22. This season can be the best for luxury shopping. Whether it is chic swimwear for your winter sun holiday or designer lingerie for a Christmas gift there is plenty to explore at ESSILI. Shop for your season's favourites at Essili.com and enter traveller12 For a 10% discount code, expires 31.12.2015. For more information email: office@essili.com

23. SWEET CHEEKS is all about natural beauty, their sugar body scrubs and hydrating hair masks are made from only the best ingredients including hand-picked lavender, fresh lime and 100% pure coconut oil. Not only will they make the perfect gift, they are all-natural, vegan, responsibly sourced and PETA approved! Visit getsweetcheeks.com or email info@getsweetcheeks.com

24. Winner of a prestigious award: SVETLANA MARSHALL's jewellery is an inspiring and versatile form of art; women can express themselves through her intriguing pieces, draping the chains to enhance their natural line, just as a designer does with cloth. No woman wears them the same way. www.svetlanamarshall.co.uk Call 44 (0) 7552882785 or email

swetlana@svetlanamarshall.co.uk to find out more.

25. CHANII B shoes is an Obsession for shoes and handbags. Limited edition and bespoke designer footwear and accessories from designer Chantal Pilon flagship shop in Bath 9 Milsom Place. Call 01225 333693 or online chaniibshoes.com

26. The Harris Tweed collection from SNOW PAW is an exceptional range of footwear, hand-cut by professional tailors and finished with precision to produce boots and slippers that are practical, warm, and very stylish. All their boots have a suede foot, Harris Tweed leg, are lined in matching 100% sheepskin and finished with Harris Tweed and Snow Paw labels. See the range and buy online at www.snowpawuk.com

27. Introducing CLAUDIO LUGLI SHIRTS! Italian quality with sophisticated and vibrant print design. Claudio Lugli's garments are in themselves works of art, each one individually

designed and made only in strictly limited numbers. Make a statement. Featured is the CP6085 Navy, £80.00. Visit www.claudioluglishirts.com call 020 8450 1274 or email nav@claudioluglishirts.com

28. Introducing fragrances made mobile. PERPHONE® is an elegant perfume bottle designed for your iPhone. This stylish smartphone case carries Galimard perfumes in a replaceable atomising unit. When the fragrance runs out, simply pop in a refill! Perfect for the person who needs fragrance on the go, but doesn't want to carry a heavy perfume bottle. Discover more at www.perphone.com



29. ROBERT PIGUET's Duo Extraordinaire features two of the legendary brand's most spectacular offerings: Alameda and Visa de Robert Piguet. Worn individually or layered together, this sumptuous pairing is delicious and addictive featuring notes of candied patchouli, leather, pear and sandalwood. A Selfridges exclusive; £180. Visit www.rober(piguetparfums.com 30. Gorgeous CARPET BAGS are a stylish and unique gift option. These individually hand-crafted treasures are made in the heart of East Anglia using velvety soft yet durable viscose and cotton rugs. With a number of different traditional carpet designs to choose from, there's something for everyone. Buy online at www.carpetbags.co.uk

31. KERATIA offers the ultimate replica diamond jewellery in 18 carat gold, from £350. Complete peace of mind when travelling. Visit www.keratia.com 10% off with the offer code TRAVELLERJAN16, expires 31st January 2016.

32. The Daphne Signature Silver from DU MAURIER WATCHES is now available on this fabulous hot pink strap. Team this stunning Swiss made, Limited Edition watch with bold, bright colour this winter to chase away the gloom. Also available on pastel pink, pale blue, red and black straps. Daphne Signature £440. See the full collection at www.dumaurierwatches.com or call 0845 5193074.

33. Calling all serious art collectors and fashionistas, we're obsessed with artist Rebecca Rose's 'SCULPTURINGS' in galleries across Los Angeles, Beijing, New York and now Art Basel Miami Beach. If you're escaping to the sandy shores of South Beach this December, explore her solid Sterling works of wearable art in person at SCOPE and Aqua Art Fairs during Art Basel. www.sculpturings.com or call: +001 323 377 3883.

34. MESSADO combines Sterling Silver and 24ct Gold Vermeil to produce elegant affordable jewellery, some of which can be personalised with engravings to create unique pieces for yourself or as a gift. Prices from £20-£160. Visit www.messado.co.uk and enter COND15 to receive a 15% discount (expires 31.1.16).

35. D. R. HARRIS Almond Oil Soap always goes down well at this time of year as a gift or present to a host. A blend of Rose Geranium, Cinnamon and Clove adds spice to winter baths.

Available at the newly re-opened flagship store at 29 St. James's Street, SW1. Visit www.drharris.co.uk

36. Ros Heathcote's delicious, nutritious, Bone Broths are made with the very best organic bones, vegetables, herbs, seasoning, apple cider vinegar and spring water. It can be consumed as a hot drink or diluted and used as a stock in cooking adding important amino acids, minerals, and collagen to your daily diet. BOROUGH BROTH CO's 24 Hour Organic Chicken and Beef Broths are available at Selfridges Foodhall and please check the website for an updated list of stockists! Visit www.boroughbroth.co.uk

37. A fabulous range of ethically sourced, lovingly handcrafted Avarca sandals, authentically made on the Balearic Islands. For a fashion forward twist choose from our wide range of

textured fabrics and gorgeous leathers, like bright block neon, animal prints, metallic leathers or natural nubucks. Whether you are travelling across the globe, from city to city or simply navigating London's underground maze, PALMAIRA SANDALS are a multi destination essential to see you through from dawn till dusk, beach to bar. Check out www.palmairasandals.com to see the full range or call +44 (0)7873247133.

38. RUM-BAR recognises that not everyone is an overproof rum drinker. Now that early batches of rum have had more time to mature Rum-Bar Gold was a welcome addition to the Rum-Bar Brand. Aged in barrels made of American White Oak, Rum-Bar Gold is a hand-blended combination of their aged rums. The "4 Year Old" age statement on the label indicates the minimum age of any rum in the bottle. Visit www.ashantiimports.com for more information.

39. PEVONIA has made this year's Christmas shopping a whole lot easier with stunning gift sets that offer something for everyone. These luxury festive present ideas are available for a limited time only. So what are you waiting for? Give the gift of flawless skin this Christmas with Pevonia. Visit www.pevonia.co.uk

40. SEEDS OF ITALY's patented wood burning ovens make the perfect gift for those looking to make authentic Italian pizza, roasts, stews and breads in their own home. They are artisan made in Tuscany and weighing only 55kg they are completely portable. Visit www.seedsofitaly.com for more information or call 020 8427 5020.

41. ILCSI NATURAL COSMETICS. Ilcsi is the symbol of natural and highly effective phytocosmetics since 1958. The fructose and fruit acid content of Ilcsi's sweet smelling Sour Cherry &

Blackthorn Gel Mask works to hydrate and tone skin. Buy online www.ilcsi-natural-cosmetics.co.uk or email info@ilcsi-natural-cosmetics.co.uk

42. See POSHTOTTI's fabulous new 2015 Indian summer collections of luxury silk sarongs that are handmade in one size to fit anyone. Taking you from beach to bar, or to dinner and dancing. Seen in all the luxury resorts, from St Tropez to the Caribbean, they are this summer's travel essential. Wear as a scarf, dress, skirt, top, or however you choose. View the full range

at www.silksarongs.com or www.poshtotticlothing.co.uk or call 01548 858881 for further information.

43. COMFY CLOGS are handmade in Sweden and available in a range of the latest fun and funky styles and colours. Sizes for women and children. Perfect and practical for pregnant women and useful in the house and garden! Real skin Clogs available in a variety of styles. Call Cecilia on 07815 750340 or 020 8780 9767 for a brochure. Visit them at www.comfyclogs.net

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www.windfallcottage.com or call 01386 881323.

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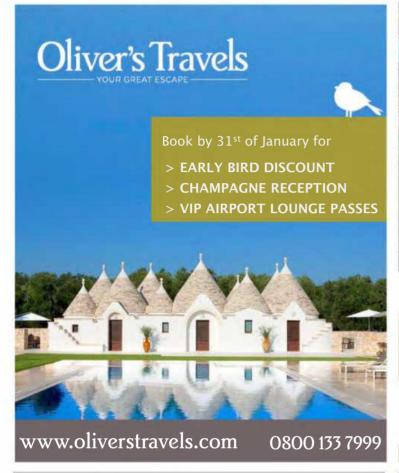
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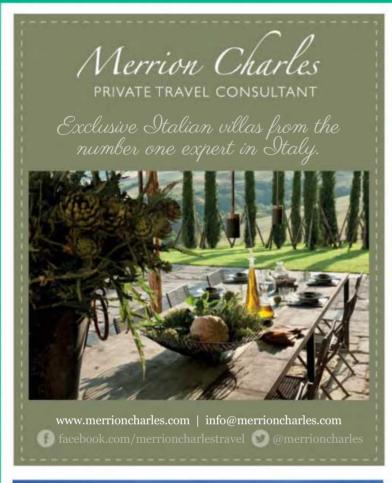






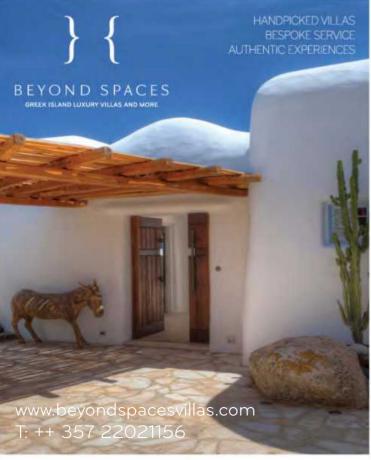
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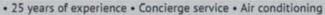




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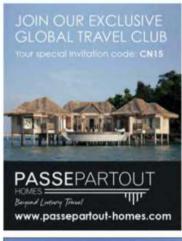
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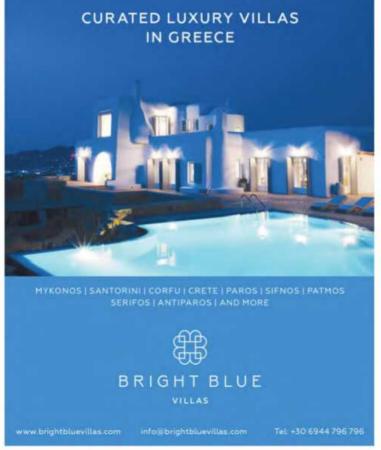




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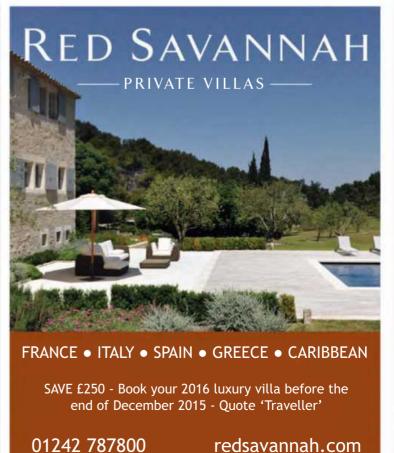
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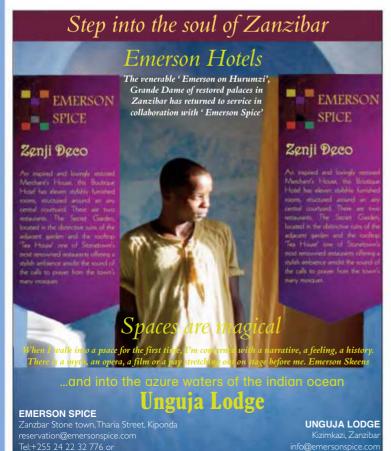


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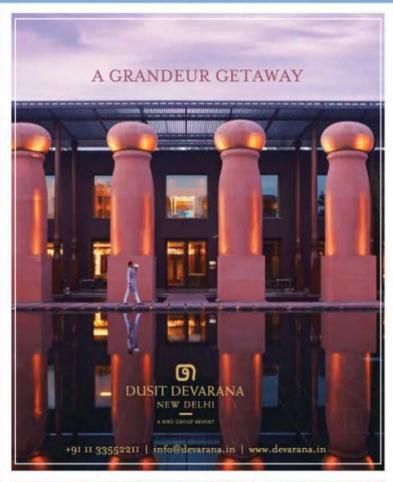
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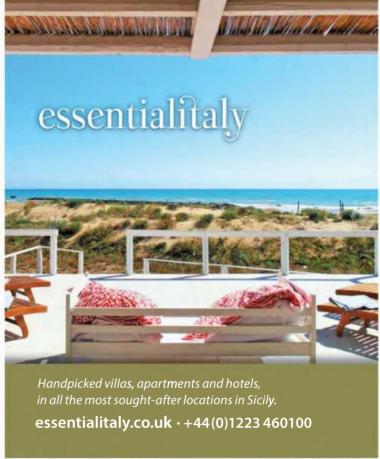


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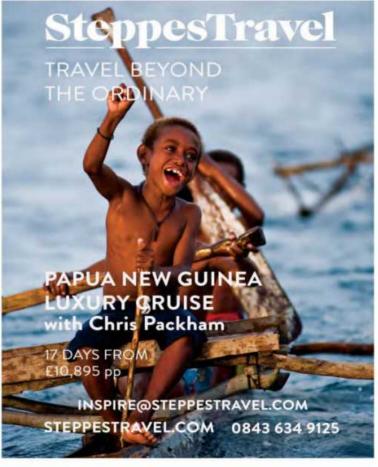
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